DISSENT

THE PROBLEM OF AMERICAN POWER
"Ikeism"—McCarthyism—H-Bomb—Indochina

SUMMER 1954 **60c**

The purpose of this magazine is suggested by its name: to dissent from the bleak atmosphere of conformism that pervades the political and intellectual life of the United States; to dissent from the support of the "status quo," now so noticeable on the part of many former radicals and socialists; to dissent from the terrible assumption that a new war is necessary or inevitable.

The accent of DISSENT will be radical. Its tradition will be the tradition of democratic socialism. We shall try to reassert the libertarian values of the socialist ideal, and at the same time, to discuss freely and honestly what in the socialist tradition remains alive and what needs to be discarded or modified. We are, it goes without saying, unalterably opposed to all forms of totalitarianism, both of the Fascist and the Stalinist varieties.

DISSENT is not and does not propose to become a political party or group. On the contrary, its existence is based on an awareness that in America today there is no significant socialist movement and that, in all likelihood, no such movement will appear in the immediate future.

DISSENT will not have any editorial position or statements. Each writer will speak for himself. Our magazine will be open to a wide range of opinion, though naturally our editorial emphasis will be such as to favor those contributions which help reestablish socialist thought and values. At the same time we shall welcome any expression of competent thought or scholarly contributions touching upon our area of interest, even if these dissent from DISSENT.

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DISSENT

A QUARTERLY OF SOCIALIST OPINION

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THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY

a) Time for a Change: *At least four-fifths of the American people . . . had united in the election of General Grant to the Presidency, and probably had been more or less affected in their choice by the parallel they felt between Grant and Washington. Nothing could be more obvious. Grant represented order. He was a great soldier, and the soldier always represented order. He might be as partisan as he pleased, but a general who had organized and commanded half a million or a million men in the field, must know how to administer. . . . The task of bringing the Government back to regular practices, and of restoring moral and mechanical order to administration, was not very difficult; it was ready to do it itself, with a little encouragement. No doubt . . . the confusion was considerable, but the general disposition was good, and everyone had echoed the famous phrase: 'Let us have peace.'*

b) The New Congress: *Adams was young and easily deceived . . . but even at twice his age he could not see that this reliance on Grant was unreasonable. Had Grant been a Congressman one would have been on one's guard, for one knew the type. One never expected from a Congressman more than good intentions and public spirit. Newspaper men as a rule had no great respect for the lower House; Senators had less; and Cabinet officers had none at all. Indeed, one day when Adams was pleading with a Cabinet officer for patience and tact in dealing with Representatives, the Secretary impatiently broke out: 'You can't use tact with a Congressman! A Congressman is a hog! You must take a stick and hit him on the snout!'*

. . . 'If a Congressman is a hog, what is a Senator?' This innocent question, put in a candid spirit, petrified any executive officer that ever sat a week in his office. Even Adams admitted that Senators passed belief.

c) Ten Millionaires and a Plumber: *. . . (Adams) went to the Capitol to hear the names announced which should reveal the carefully guarded secret of Grant's Cabinet. To the end of his life, he wondered at the suddenness of the revolution which actually, within five minutes, changed his intended future into an absurdity so laughable as to make him ashamed of it. He was to hear a long list of Cabinet announcements not much weaker or more futile than that of Grant. . . . A great soldier might be a baby politician.*

d) The Chief Executive: *. . . Grant appeared as an intermittent energy, immensely powerful when awake, but plastic and passive in repose. He said that neither he nor the rest of the staff knew why Grant succeeded. . . . For stretches of time, his mind seemed torpid. Rawlins and the others would systematically talk their ideas into it, for weeks, not directly, but by discussion among themselves, in his presence. In the end, he would announce the idea as his own, without seeming conscious of the discussion. . . . They could never measure his character or be sure when he would act. They could never follow a mental process in his thought. They were not sure that he did think.*

. . . Grant fretted and irritated him, like the Terebratula, as a defiance of first principles. He had no right to exist. He should have been extinct for ages. The idea that, as a society grew older, it grew one-sided, upset evolution, and made of education a fraud. That, two thousand years after Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, a man like Grant should be called—and should actually and truly be—the highest product of the most advanced evolution, made evolution ludicrous. One must be as commonplace as Grant's own commonplaces to maintain such an absurdity. The progress of evolution from President Washington to President Grant, was alone evidence enough to upset Darwin.

From *The Education of Henry Adams*

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THE PROBLEM OF U. S. POWER

The uneven development of world economy has resulted in a disastrous split between the industrialized West and primitive East; but it has also brought another split, at the moment quite as important, between the United States and its own allies. Those theoreticians of liberalism who advance claims for American uniqueness generally do so in a spirit of eulogy, but if they were to stand back a little from the problem and see it in some historical perspective, they might make a genuine contribution. For there *is* a sense in which America is becoming unique. Even as it is inextricably drawn into the historical dilemmas of Europe and Asia, even as Europe and Asia become "Americanized," there has developed in this country such a concentration of wealth and power, with so many new attendant values, as to make America increasingly isolated from the rest of the world.

Far more than good or bad will is at stake. A kind of symbiotic relationship can be traced: the decline of Europe has proceeded in direct ratio to the rise of America. The power potential of the country, its unprecedented emphasis on norms of accumulation and efficiency, its literal incapacity to understand and irritated refusal to sympathize with the patterns of thought which dominate Europe and Asia—these are factors, sometimes the result of bad will but more often of a multiplying cultural distance, which make America into a lonely power colossus, alternating between gestures of humiliating generosity and crude intimidation, sincerely convinced that only by the imposition of its will can the world be saved. But the world resists this will; it cannot, even if it would, surrender its own modes of response.

Eisenhower's victory rested upon an appeal to the imagination of the middle class. He was popular not merely because he was a general; it seems likely that a swashbuckling military man would not have won the election. Eisenhower was popular because he was a certain kind of general: unspectacular, old-fashioned, *sound*. His political appeal had been shrewdly designed to elicit the vision of a pulling-back from the bewilderments of that highly complex world with which the Truman administration had, willy-

nilly, established occasional commerce. The middle class voter who put Eisenhower in office recognized in "Ikeism" the same benign indifference to the *idea* of Europe or the *idea* of Asia that he himself felt. "Ikeism" represented a wish to return to the era BC—Before Complexity.

Had there been any possibility for the realization of this wish, all might have gone well. Then, we might have had a little more or less of scandal than under Harding, a little more or less of social mediocrity than under Grant. But no one, except obsolete moralists, would have cared. The whole tragi-comedy of "Ikeism" is that it represents the hunger for normalcy at a time when normalcy is utterly impossible.

1) The Anatomy of "Ikeism"

A few years ago C. Wright Mills suggested a rough but usable distinction between sophisticated and practical conservatives. The first might be represented by the editorial position of ***Fortune,*** the second by a small town Republican paper. The sophisticated recognized the need for "internationalism," while the practical resisted his recognition of the same need. The sophisticated believed in a measure of Welfare economics while the practical liked to think he didn't.

Now, one way of looking at the Eisenhower victory is as the fruit of a union between these two conservative impulses. The sophisticated conservatives understood that victory was possible for the Republican Party only by appealing to the images of the practical conservatives, which embodied the ostrich yearnings of the American middle class. And the practical conservatives knew they couldn't win without the high-powered manipulations of the sophisticated.

Once the Eisenhower administration took office, the two mentalities worked with surprising smoothness. They struck upon a convenient formula: each acquiesced in the worst features of the other. The coarse psychology of the practicals dominated domestic policy: tideland oil, tax "relief" for corporate business, plundering of national resources, acceptance of a reserve army of four to five million unemployed. The sophisticated conservatives provided the cynical rationale for a continued whittling away at civil liberties, the infamous persecution of scientists, the imprisonment of Communists, etc.; they knew the formula by which an excuse for the exceptional becomes a justification for establishing it as the routine. And in foreign policy the Eisenhower administration charted a dizzying compromise. Talking loudly while carrying a small stick, it turned a face of political schizophrenia to the outer world: now it purred like a slick machiavellian, now it snarled like a frightened small-town politician.

The most important fact about the Eisenhower administration is the

climate it has established: fear, cowardice, suspicion, anti-intellectualism, swagger, distrust, denunciation. The Oppenheimer case represents "Ikeism" at the low political and moral point where it touches upon McCarthyism. But the over-all tendency toward a garrison state—a tendency, happily, that is still far from having reached its goal—has little to do with McCarthyism, for it was already present under Truman. It is all too easy to blame McCarthy for the social and political ills which are the responsibility of his betters.

Now the world's greatest power, the United States and its administration are perplexed by the problem of power. The men in Washington know that they are extremely *powerful*, but the possession of power does not solve the problem of how to use it. The men who rule in Washington sincerely believe that material strength, wealth, money, technology, *know-how* will vanquish all obstacles; that the sum of these constitutes a policy. They demonstrate, thereby, an inadequate sense of reality.

2) McCarthyism as Malaise

Various theories have been suggested to explain the social roots of McCarthyism in America, and we hope to return to them in a later DISSENT. Here we would suggest a simple but perhaps fundamental explanation for the power of McCarthyism: the deep-seated if frequently suppressed state of *panic*, itself the result of the split between American power and American inability to use its power, which has seized large sections of the American population. Panic restrained or frozen under the mask of homely confidence—that is frequently the content of "Ikeism." Panic released and allowed to luxuriate—that is the syndrome of McCarthyism.

When America faced the Nazi threat, it could react to a new phenomenon with a certain shocked confidence. Once it realized that Nazism went beyond the bounds of conventional immorality, that Nazism contained an impulse to make terror into the norm of life, the American mind could use this analysis to meet the Nazi danger. And whatever its inadequacies, this view of Nazism did have a genuine relation to reality. Where Stalinism pretends to be the fulfillment of Western humanism, Nazism frankly proclaimed itself the enemy of humanism, which has made the Stalinists harder to cope with.

Stalinism is cold not hot; calculating not irrational; cautious not maniacal. It cannot be understood as the emanation of pure evil; that is all very well for Whittaker Chambers, but not of conspicuous help in the rice paddies of Indochina. It cannot be understood merely as totalitarianism, for the problem is to make the proper discriminations as to what kind of totalitarian movement it is. Nor can it be understood as the legitimate

heir of Marxism—though official American ideology, wilfully eager to discredit radicalism by identifying it with totalitarianism, does treat the Stalinist movement in these terms. For the American government to act upon what is peculiar to Stalinism—for the American government to treat it as a blend of reactionary and pseudo-revolutionary appeals, as a movement both anti-capitalist and anti-socialist, as a movement that thrives upon the vacuum created by the collapse of capitalism as a *world* economy—all this would require a political openness inconceivable in the present atmosphere, a willingness to recognize its own social obsolescence, and a readiness to support anti-Stalinist movements in Asia and Europe which, to be politically effective, must also be anti-capitalist in one or another way.

The greater American bewilderment and irritation in failing to stop Stalinism internationally, the greater the success of McCarthyism. The secret of McCarthy's power is to be found in the pervasive and undifferentiated frustration which millions of Americans, and particularly those who bear the burdens of power, feel with regard to the international Communist movement.

Nothing seems to work, nothing seems able to stop them! Contain the Stalinists in Europe, and they thrive in Asia. Bottle them up in Berlin, and they break loose in Guatemala. Something uncanny, something magical seems to attach itself to the Stalinist victories, in a way that did not seem true for the Nazis. War—a full, terrible, releasing war—might be a way out, but our very progress in atomic weapons makes it risky. And besides, the Stalinists seem entirely satisfied with a series of small bleeding wars rather than one grand apocalyptic blowout. So runs a dominant thread of American feeling.

And the result, among many Americans, is frustration, bewilderment, impotence and occasional bursts of anger. If one can't figure one's way out of a labyrinth, one will try in final desperation to barge through it head-first. And that, we would suggest, is the socio-psychological material from which McCarthyism is made. "Ikeism" too expresses the same fustration, but expresses it through an effort to deny its reality. McCarthyism and "Ikeism" are of course very different, but they are also symmetrical: both are symptoms not merely of the inability of the Republican Party to rule, but more fundamentally of ***a loss of social confidence and cohesion in American life.***

It is not to be supposed that this disintegration begins only with the day Eisenhower takes office. Signs of it, and very heavy signs, can already be seen in earlier years. The Oppenheimer scandal points to McCarthyism, to be sure; but it also points back to the Truman policy of promiscuous "loyalty" regulations and promiscuous "subversive lists" which provided a quasi-juridical base for what has happened during the past two years. When

America lost China, the process of panic began. Stalinism won the largest country of Asia; the United States "discovered" that the Communist Party was plotting and put Eugene Dennis in jail.

Today McCarthyism functions on several levels: as the personal voice or *charisma* of the creature himself; as his secret apparatus of informers and tipsters who constitute a kind of "parallel center" or "dual power" within and against the legal government; as a political mood which cuts through all layers of American society. And most important of all, it constitutes a paralyzing veto upon American foreign policy, *any* American foreign policy: on the one hand, it is prepared to sabotage as "treason" any policy which takes into account the realities of Stalinist power by making temporary arrangements with it, and on the other hand, it pushes for a policy that can only have meaning in or lead to a major war but without being willing to take responsibility for that war. It is sometimes said that McCarthyism has no foreign policy of its own, but that is not, strictly speaking, true: McCarthyism combines the gesture of extreme war-hawk provocation with the underlying impulses of isolationism.

As yet, McCarthyism is not a full-fledged fascist movement. To become that it would have to have at its disposal a chronic economic crisis and a coherent mass movement. The second of these could perhaps be quickly improvised, but the first is not likely to be available for some time—hence, incidentally, McCarthy's shrewdness in concentrating on the Communist issue, which will be available for a long time.

McCarthy may suffer defeats, but the political mood he personifies will not disappear. So long as America remains on the defensive internationally, so long as we continue to have Indochinas and Guatemalas, trying to stop Communist mass movements with inane "Emperors" and Latin dictators, McCarthyism will survive, ebbing now but rising later. If a prerequisite for fascism is the crumbling of social cohesion, then McCarthy is doing that work, and doing it with the help of the major, respectable forces of the country. Anyone who compares Eisenhower's cowardice toward McCarthy with Hindenburg's toward Hitler is likely to know some chilling moments.

3) The H Bomb as Politics

In the H Bomb, the Eisenhower administration faced its greatest test. When it announced its ability to wipe out cities with one bomb, a shiver of foreboding ran through the world; yet America, the greatest power on earth, could only repeat at this moment of severe moral-political crisis, the empty catchword, Massive Retaliation. This means, and so large sections of the world took it to mean, that the H Bomb is the core of American foreign policy.

A foreign policy geared to nuclear weapons is realistically a disaster and morally a scandal. Immediately, the H Bomb made things harder, not easier, for American foreign policy. If the Bomb seems to remove global atomic war from the realm in which *any* political objectives can be achieved by either combatant, it makes all the more plausible those small localized wars the Stalinists promote. The very magnitude of the new atomic weapons encourages the Stalinists into the not unwarranted belief that they may still be able to chew off a bit here and there. Mao Tse-tung has shrewdly remarked that China is too backward a nation to be overly worried by atomic weapons, while Secretary of War Wilson, back from a trip to the Far East, reports that the war in Asia is today "90 per cent political." Add these facts together and you see that the idea of Massive Retaliation is both hollow and disastrous.

Not only is the Bomb as Foreign Policy a moral horror, it also makes the task of breaking millions of Europeans and Asians from the Stalinist orbit infinitely more difficult. The image of America as the country of the Bomb throws large sections of the world into political torpor, which in turn makes them easy prey for the Stalinists and the Stalinist-controlled sections of neutralism. It is hopeless to speak of American good will or democracy, to scatter bits of Point Four money here and there, when in the eyes of millions of people we are the nation of the Bomb. And is this merely the result of malicious anti-American propaganda? Let us remember which nation was the first, and thus far the only, one to use atomic weapons.

At the very least, America might have considered with a certain seriousness and courtesy Nehru's proposal for an international conference designed to institute a ban upon further use and manufacture of the Bomb. Instead of hinting darkly that Nehru is soft on communism or even something of a fellow-traveller, America might have responded immediately with a dramatic public gesture to allay the fears of the world and proclaim its eagerness to stop atomic war production. This would not at all have meant to "trust" the Russians. There is no reason to trust the Russians, but *there is every reason to speak to the world.*

The very locale of the H bomb experiments tells us something about American mentality. Implicit in the decision to explode the Bomb in the Pacific is the traditional contempt of the white man for the colored peoples.

Moral Man in an Immoral Society: "Even such minor incidents as the wounding of Japanese fishermen by ashes from our atomic blasts in the Pacific have become sources of a new wave of anti-Americanism in the Orient."—Reinhold Niebuhr, *The New Leader,* April 12, 1954.

Marshall Islanders can be shunted from one place to another; a few Japanese fishermen may get burned. . . . And when the Asian press expressed its resentment, U. S. reaction was mainly that these Asians, unduly sensitive as Orientals are known to be, were making too much of a fuss.

For once, considerations of morality and realism come very close to one another. To rely on the H Bomb as the power behind our policy can lead only to the disaster of the cobalt bomb. It may well be, as many people argue, that unilateral atomic disarmament is at present too great a risk. But between the proclaimed extremes of Massive Retaliation and unilateral atomic disarmament lies the real problem: political struggle against Stalinism. By an old twist of history, the very madness of the armament race now makes it likely that we will not have a global war in the near future and that consequently the decisive struggle with Stalinism will be fought in the arena of politics. Precisely, that is, where the West is least prepared.

4) Foreign Policy in an Age of Revolution

It now seems highly probable that Stalinism has achieved a major victory in Indochina. If the West does not intervene militarily, the Viet Minh is almost certain to take complete control of the country; if the West does intervene, there follows the likelihood, not of wresting the country from the Stalinists, but of a long bleeding war. We are paying for decades of imperialist cupidity and obtuseness. As Walter Lippman has put it with classical brevity: "The French lost the war in Indochina, not because they were not brave, but because they failed to win the confidence and support of the Vietnamese nation. . . ."

In 1946, when a coalition Vietnamese regime was established in the north of the country under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh but not yet under the domination of the Stalinists, political measures of a bold and imaginative kind might have saved the country. But the French, who had collaborated with the Japanese and been restored to power by British bayonets, suddenly withdrew, later in the same year, their recognition from this government in the north. Thereby they drove many nationalist, non-Communist Vietnamese into Ho's arms, and transformed what should have been a domestic political struggle between Vietnamese integrity and Stalinist intervention into a colonial war against a foreign imperialist power. Every political move of the French was incredibly stupid—but stupid not in an individual sense. What was involved was a *class* stupidity, the rigid stiffened reaction of a class losing control. As a consequence, the Stalinists were helped into power, the anti-Stalinists demoralized and atomized. Political measures can defeat Communist guerrillas in Asia, but they have to be taken *in time*. Today things are almost hopeless in Indochina, but the lessons of

Indochina need to be drastically applied to Malaya and Indonesia, where crises of a parallel kind are rapidly maturing. To suppose that an antedeluvian pro-consul like General Templer, until recently British chief in Malaya, can defeat, let alone understand, Stalinism, is to suppose we are still living in the age of Kipling. And for such mistakes we shall pay.

The central fact is that we continue to live in a revolutionary age. The revolutionary impulse has been contaminated, corrupted, debased, demoralied; it has been appropriated by the enemies of socialism. All true. But the social energy behind that revolutionary impulse remains. Now it bursts out in one part of the world, now in another. It cannot be suppressed entirely. Everywhere except in the United States, millions of human beings, certainly the majority of those with any degree of political articulateness, live for some kind of social change. The workers of Europe are consciously anti-capitalist, the populations of Asia and South America anti-imperialist. These are the dominant energies of our time and whoever gains control of them, whether in legitimate or distorted forms, will triumph.

But American foreign policy is enacted in ignorance or contempt of this central fact. America now has several possible courses. One may recognize that the basic struggle in the world is political and therefore try to undercut the hold of Stalinism by a genuine appeal of radical democracy. Or one may believe that the political appeal is either useless or unavailable and that only war can end the Communist danger. But if the political struggle is discarded and if war seems too risky, what then remains? The necessity for maneuver and some sort of breathing spell. Here too, however, the Dulles policy proves impossible. Because of the legalistic-moralistic frame of Dulles' own mind, and more important, because of the heavy pressures of the McCarthyite wing of the Republican Party, which presses toward a war policy without being ready to face up to its consequences, the U. S. government is committed to skimping the usual diplomacy of bargaining which involves a simple recognition that other forms of national power, like them or not, do exist. Except for a reliance upon its material strength, the U. S. has today no foreign policy: neither political nor diplomatic nor adventurist.

For the sake of simplification, let us say that the two major social problems facing humanity are: the obsolescence of the European nation-state with its equally obsolescent economy, and the extreme unevenness of world economy, which dooms Asia, Africa and South America to poverty and backwardness. The first of these problems might be solved, at least in part, by the creation of a United States of Europe able to achieve a measure of independence from the two great power blocs. The second is even more complex, since it involves the consciousness of millions of people still on the edge of illiteracy, as well as the difficulty of accumulating in Asia a sufficient capital reserve without thereby becoming dependent on the West. Let us

assume—though we doubt that, in the absence of a large-scale political activization in Asia, even this would be sufficient—that a tremendous aid program of $30 to $40 billions from the West could raise the economic and cultural level of Asia to a significant degree.

Can we seriously suppose, however, that such a program will or is likely—or can—be instituted by any *status quo* government in the United States, be it conservative or liberal? Consider how different the whole political-social atmosphere in this country would have to be before such a proposal could even be seriously discussed. Consider the taxation, upon the population at large or the corporate interests or both, that would be necessary for such a program. Consider the competitive dangers a vigorous industrialized Asia might then present to American capitalist economy. Consider, in short, the serious political struggles that would inevitably occur in America consequent upon such a program.

It is here that the liberals, who also recognize the need for massive aid to Asia, fail to think through the implications of their ideas. They refuse, or are unable, to weigh the inescapable consequences of such a proposal: namely, serious political and social struggle at home. They fail to see that the battle for the mind of Asia can be successful only if and when Asia is presented with an image of a radically different America, and an image based on reality, not a press agent's phrases. That America has a high standard of living, a high level of productivity, may arouse feelings of envy among the politically articulate Asians; but not admiration. Their behavior is frequently based on other assumptions, neither more nor less "idealistic"—simply different.

America speaks today as if it wants to sell the Asians the final product of a long history of social and economic development; but it does not do anything to let them first engage in those revolutionary and liberating movements through which we have ourselves entered modern history. America may speak in the name of the American revolution, but the policies it proposes and the images it advances are those of an American restoration. For it is not merely stupidity or cussedness that makes U. S. policy favor Syngman Rhee or Chiang Kai-shek—it is our basic inability, which would in large measure be shared by a liberal Democratic regime as well, to come to terms with the future of Asia.

We are not trying to suggest a "program" here. Far more important is an understanding of the root situation. Nor are we saying that "only" a socialist America could help solve the problems of Asia, for that, while perhaps ultimately true, does not impinge upon any immediate possibilities. We are merely trying to suggest the direction, the trend in which America would have to go—toward a radical democracy, toward a profound and humble effort to grasp the outlook of peoples different from itself, toward a willing-

ness to share its unprecedented wealth in order to revive the health of the whole world, toward a sense of community and equality.

Whether such an America could be created short of socialism is perhaps an academic question—we doubt that it could be created *very* short of socialism. On the other hand, much could yet be done, in terms of concrete short-range measures, to undercut the roots of Stalinism in Asia. There is nothing inherent in capitalist society which produces the extreme inanity of the Dulles policy: something must be left to accident. There is nothing inherent in capitalist society which requires the American Secretary of State to ask the European nations permission to search their ships for possible arms to Guatemala (shades of 1812)—a proposal which is not merely insanely stupid but reeks of the imperialist psychology.

If America, at the very least, were to present itself not as a "savior" of Asia, but simply as a power that will do all it can to allow the Asian peoples to work out their own destinies, that too would be helpful. We have no illusions whatever about the possibilities of reaching permanent agreements with the Russians; but certainly temporary agreements might be possible in order to give Asia, and the whole human race, *a little more time*. With the equalization of atomic power, there may be a possibility of reaching highly limited arrangements of the sort that were reached with regard to poison gas—and which were observed by the totalitarian powers during the Second World War for reasons, of course, not founded in humanitarian sentiments. For if we cannot hope for a fundamental solution to the problem of Stalinism from the bourgeois world, we can at least hope for temporary balances of power which will allow us more time to live, to grope for solutions. This, however, is what the politics of panic which characterizes the Eisenhower administration is least calculated to give us.

Meanwhile, the tragedy of American power becomes more terrible and terrifying each day. The very resources that could lift mankind to new levels of well-being serve only to increase the distance between America and the rest of the world. The very resources that should help in the triumph of democracy seem, by an almost devilish process of bewilderment, to work in behalf of relatively impoverished totalitarian nations. Between America and the remainder of the world communication becomes increasingly uncertain, sporadic, bitter. American power multiplies—but the power to dispose of it creatively, with human warmth and intelligence, has never seemed smaller than today.

I.H.

The Future of Russian Society: — *The views of Isaac Deutscher, author of biographies of Stalin and Trotsky, on the future developments of Russian society have already occasioned much controversy. The article printed below presents what is perhaps the most systematic and concise exposition of his theories. It is the original version, printed here in English for the first time, of an article that appeared in different form in the French magazine,* L'Esprit. *Two comments on Mr. Deutscher's article follow. There will be further comments in the next* DISSENT. *Mr. Deutscher will, of course, be invited to reply to his critics.*

THE FUTURE OF RUSSIAN SOCIETY

Isaac Deutscher

My book "Russia, What Next?," which I wrote and concluded within a few weeks after Stalin's death, is appearing in a French translation shortly before the first anniversary of that event. This is a short interval; yet it has been crowded with startling events, and during it Russia has moved quite a distance from where she stood on March 6, 1953. It is enough to recall what some of the best known commentators and experts predicted at that time, to realize how far indeed Russia is now from that point of departure. Some of the experts, for instance, argued, not without superficial logic, that in a police state the police was the decisive factor of power, and that consequently Beria, its head, was by definition Stalin's real successor, sure to oust Malenkov and Molotov. Other reputable analysts assured us stolidly that there was and could be "nothing new in the East," because Stalin had settled beforehand the issue of the succession and because his heirs, tied by the strongest bonds of solidarity, saw eye to eye with one another over all major issues of policy.

The most obtuse Stalinists and the bitterest anti-Communists expressed this view with equal self-confidence. Curiously enough, this was also the view held even later by so intelligent a writer as Mr. George Kennan and expressed in his critique of my book. I know of another very shrewd man,

the Moscow Ambassador of a great Western power, who spent the whole evening of July 9, 1953, arguing that my analysis of the Russian situation, given in "Russia, What Next?" was utterly wrong because it presupposed a cleavage within the Soviet ruling group. He, the Ambassador, knew from close observation and long study that no such cleavage existed: that Malenkov, Beria, Molotov, and Khrushchev thought and acted in unison, knowing full well that their chances of survival depended on their absolute unity. Having thus destroyed my analysis and hypothesis once for all, His Excellency went to bed only to awaken next morning to the dramatic news about Beria's downfall. . . .

I know well where my own work might gain from some corrections, and what revision would be advisable in the light of recent events. But such corrections and revisions would not yet go beyond retouching a paragraph here and changing slightly the emphasis of my argument there. Far from refuting my prognostication, events have confirmed it; and they have done so in the only way in which they confirm a theoretical formula, namely by showing a pattern of development which, although it harmonizes basically with the prediction, is naturally more complicated and dynamic than any theoretical formula.

My prognostication has not been basically refuted by events perhaps because from the outset I approached my task somewhat more modestly than many another writer on this subject. I did not pretend to know what would be the fate of this or that personality in the Soviet ruling group. I drew no personal horoscope for Malenkov, or Beria, or Khrushchev. Instead, I concentrated on outlining, summing up, and projecting into the future the broad social trends at work in contemporary Russia. This led me to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was approaching a critical turn of its history at which it would be compelled to begin to move in a new direction, and that Stalin's death, far from being the main cause of the change, would merely speed it up and underline its inevitability.

My analysis and conclusions have become the subjects of an animated controversy on both sides of the Atlantic. It is hardly surprising that some of my fiercest critics are precisely those luckless soothsayers who either had already seen Beria in Stalin's place, or had been quite sure of the "absolute ideological solidarity" of Stalin's heirs. I have also drawn the wrath of the professional propagandists of the cold war, and quite especially of the anti-Communist crusaders fighting under the lofty banners of the "Congress for Cultural Freedom." On the other hand, many serious and able writers have defended my views with much conviction and effect. This controversy has already found its echoes, both friendly and hostile, in the French press as well; and I propose to deal here especially with M. Raymond Aron's extensive critique of my views which appeared in the October issue of *Preuves*. . . .

Any realistic analysis of the Stalin era and of its conclusion must draw a balance of the Soviet industrial revolution of the last twenty-five years, the revolution by force of which Russia has from one of the industrially most backward nations become the world's second industrial power. This process was accompanied by vast educational progress, into which the bulk of Soviet society has been drawn. Stalinist despotism and terrorism drove the Soviet people to carry through this industrial revolution, in part despite themselves, at an unprecedented pace, and in the face of unprecedented difficulties. The "primitive magic of Stalinism" reflected the cultural backwardness of Soviet society in the formative years and in the middle stretches of the Stalin era. From this argument I concluded that with the progress achieved in the 1950s, the Stalinist terrorism and primitive magic had outlived their day and were coming into conflict with the new needs of Soviet society. The higher level of industrial and general civilization favored a gradual democratization of Soviet political life, although a military dictatorship, of the Bonapartist type, might also arise amid mounting international tensions. Both these prospects signify an end to Stalinism. An attempt to galvanize the Stalinist regime and orthodoxy was still possible and even probable; but it could hardly meet with more than episodic success.

The cold war propagandist bases all his arguments and slogans on the assumption of an unchangeable and irredeemable level in Stalinism or Communism at large. Remove that evil, and all his ideological thrusts strike into a vacuum. He therefore stubbornly refuses to see that the "evil" has been historically determined and that the profound transformation of the structure and outlook of Soviet society cannot fail to have far-reaching political consequences.

At this point my critics, especially M. Raymond Aron, accuse me of all the mortal sins of Marxist determinism: I am said to deny the importance of human will in history; to eliminate the role of the individual, especially that of the *grand homme* and leader; and to ascribe one-sidedly to the economic structure of society that determining influence on human affairs which it does not and cannot possess.

I have, of course, never denied my Marxist convictions, but I try to stand on my own feet without leaning on Marx's much abused authority. As a matter of principle I have always endeavored to develop my argument in such a way that its validity should not depend on any specifically Marxist assumptions. One need not be a Marxist at all to agree with me on the impact of the Soviet industrial revolution upon Soviet politics. It has not occurred to a single historian of the Century, conservative or liberal, to ignore the impact of the English industrial revolution upon the politics of

Victorian England. Not a single historian can ignore the connection between that revolution and the gradual broadening of the franchise, that is the gradual democratization of England. It is a truism that modern forms of democratic life have developed mainly in industrialized nations and have, as a rule, failed to develop in nations that have remained on the pre-industrial, feudal level of civilization. But what is accepted as a truism in modern and contemporary history of the non-Communist world is, in the eyes of our critic, totally inapplicable to the Soviet Union: there it is simply preposterous to expect that massive industrialization, urbanization, and educational progress may foster any democratic trends and tendencies.

A few of the critics have put forward an argument which I am not inclined to dismiss out of hand. What about Germany? they ask. Has a high level of industrialization and mass education prevented Germany from producing the worst authoritarianism and totalitarianism? Did Nazism not have its "primitive magic"? How can one speak about Russia "outgrowing" Stalinism when Germany never really "outgrew" Nazism, which was destroyed only from the outside, through war?

I ought, perhaps, to remark that I have nowhere said or suggested that industrialization and educational progress automatically guarantee a democratic development. All I have said is that industrialization *tends* to awaken democratic aspirations in the masses. These aspirations may, of course, be frustrated or defeated by other factors. But even in Germany industrialization did foster the democratic trend. The four decades between Bismarck's *Ausnahmegesetz* and Hitler's rise saw a very considerable expansion of the democratic forms of political life, at first under the Hohenzollern Empire and then under the Weimar Republic. The German working class was the chief factor of that democratization—it wrested one democratic concession after another from its ruling classes. That it was not persistent and that it abdicated at the decisive moment, in 1933, does not obliterate the historical connection, evident even in Germany, between industrialization and democratic politics.

What Germany's history proves is this: the democratic trend was strong while German society was growing and expanding on a capitalist basis. It withered and gave place to the totalitarian trend in a decaying society based on a shrinking capitalist economy, such as Germany's economy was on the eve of Hitler's rise. Unemployment of millions, an all-pervading sense of social instability, mass fear and mass hysteria, these were the basic elements that went into the making of Nazism. In addition there was the envy, the hatred, and the contempt of *das Kleinbuergertum* for the labor movement; the illusion of that *Kleinbuergertum* that it could assert itself against both the *Grossbuergertum* and the proletariat; the determina-

tion of the German industrial and financial barons to use the *petite bourgeoisie* run amok against the proletariat; the internal division and impotence of German labor; and—last but not least—Germany's national pride wounded since the 1918 defeat and her acute craving for revenge. This was the specific and very complex combination of factors which produced the particular German brand of a totalitarian regime on the basis of a capitalist economy.

While it is obviously true that a high industrial civilization does not preclude the growth of totalitarianism, it should be even more obvious that it is not that civilization *per se* that is responsible for that growth. In each case the specific causes of totalitarianism must be examined. I have tried to expose the specific sources of Stalinism in the state of Soviet society of the 1920's, and to show that these sources have been drying up in the 1950's. It is therefore no answer to say that from very different sources, namely from the ferments of the German society of the 1920's and 1930's, there came something that was outwardly, and only outwardly, very similar to Stalinism. I insist on the analysis of the specific causes and consequences, while my critics reason very much like that old Polish peasant who argued with his children that it was useless to cure tuberculosis in the family, because, having cured tuberculosis, they would die from some epidemics sooner or later. I maintain that urbanization and modernization are "curing" the Soviet Union from Stalinism. "But think of the epidemic of Nazism," some profound thinkers reply, "to which Germany succumbed; and in view of it how can one speak about Russia curing herself of Stalinism?"

Certainly, if conditions like these that gave rise to Nazism—mass unemployment, a shrinking economy, a sense of social insecurity, national humiliation, fear, and mass hysteria—were to appear in the Soviet Union, the result would probably be very similar. However, even my critics do not expect such conditions to arise in the Soviet Union within the foreseeable future. (Such conditions might appear in consequence of Russia's defeat in a third world war, and the result would certainly be not democracy but some form of a fascist totalitarianism, if these political terms were still to retain any meaning after an atomic war).

It can never be sufficiently strongly emphasized that Soviet society, no matter whether one views it with hostile or friendly eyes, or only openmindedly, cannot be understood at all if one of its basic characteristics is ignored, namely the fact that it is an expanding society and that it expands on the basis of a planned economy making it immune from that extreme economic and moral instability which in bourgeois society tends to produce fascist mass neuroses. The Soviet Union is emerging from Stalinism with all the conditions necessary for continued expansion, expansion not merely

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during certain phases of the industrial cycle or during armament booms. Continuous expansion is in fact inherent in planned economy of the socialist, or even of the present Soviet type, as the basic form of its movement, just as the ups and downs of the trade cycle represent the form of movement peculiar to "normal" capitalism. (This is the hard core of truth in all Communist propaganda; and it is all too easy to overlook or rashly to reject it because it is usually wrapt up in thick layers of crude fiction.) Stalinist totalitarianism and primitive magic, belonging essentially to an earlier transitional period, become irrelevant, anachronistic, and untenable in this expanding society at its present level of productive forces. How much more irrelevant to the problems of that society are the phenomena of Nazism or fascism born from social decay and disintegration.

One of my French critics claims that in expounding this determinist view I am reducing *"le rôle de la volonté humaine" and* the role *"des grand hommes"* in history. I may perhaps be allowed to ask: reducing in relation to—what? To their actual role in the historical process? or to the critic's grossly exaggerated idea of that role? I certainly take the view that the human will is "free" only to the extent to which it acts as the promoter of "necessity," that is within limits circumscribed by conditions external to it. The will of the *grands hommes* represents only one particular case of the general problem of the human will: *le grand homme* "makes" history within the limits which his environment and the existing balance of social forces, national or international, allow him to do so. My French critic seems flabbergasted at my suggestion that the Bolshevik revolution of 1917 would perhaps have taken place even without Lenin. He, on the contrary, sees Lenin as the sovereign maker of that revolution, and Lenin's personal role as more important than all "objective trends," than the "Spirit of the time," and the "laws of history, and similar abstractions (the use of some of which he ascribes to me altogether fortuitously.) My French critic—M. Raymond Aron—is therefore quite consistent with himself when he writes: *"Peut-être aurait-il suffit que le train plombé qui transportait Lénine à travers l'Allemagne* [*in* 1917] *sautât ou que Trotsky fût retenu aux Etats-Unis ou en Angleterre, pour que l'Esprit du temps s'exprimât autrement."* ["Perhaps it would have been enough had the sealed train which carried Lenin across Germany smashed up, or that Trotsky had been detained in the United States or England for the spirit of the times to have expressed itself differently."] Thus my critic takes us back to the crude belief in the decisive role of the accident in history—to the old quip that the history of the Roman Empire would have been quite different if the shape of Cleopatra's nose had not been what it was—and also back to Carlyle's idea of the "hero in history," an idea perhaps indispensable to fascism, Stalinism, and . . . Gaullism. At this point I plead guilty: in relation to this view of history

I *do* reduce the role ot the *Volonté Humaine* and of *Le Grand Homme*: I do not worship at their temples.*

The extremely subjectivist and voluntarist approach of most of my critics allows them, of course, to "reduce the role" of all objective circumstances, and more specifically to ignore the impact of economic processes, unprecedented in scope and momentum, upon the political, cultural, and moral future of the Soviet Union. They see the whole of the Russian revolution in terms of the bad faith or evil ambition, or "Manichean-like" moods of a few Bolshevik leaders. These evil intentions or ambitions existed, of course, prior to the five Five Year Plans; and they continue to operate into an indefinite future. They enable one to "explain" the whole development of the Soviet Union and of world Communism as a single sequence of plots and conspiracies. How was it that Stalin first imposed upon his party, by fire and sword, the doctrine of "socialism in one country," that he compelled the whole of international Communism to accept this doctrine, and that then he did more than anyone else to contribute to the spread of Communism to a dozen countries? Was this perhaps a deep, and in a sense tragic contradiction of Stalinism, as I have tried to prove?

Nothing of the sort, say my critics. Stalin's fanatical preaching of "Socialism in one country" was either an irrelevancy or a fraud meant to mislead the world, more probably a fraud and a conspiracy. Like a certain type of anti-Semite who draws his inspiration from the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," so the cold war propagandist at heart believes in the existence of some "Protocols of the Elders of Communism" which one day will no doubt be unearthed and revealed to the world. And then it will be proven that all doctrines of Stalinism and the bloody struggles over them were only so much make-believe designed to cover up the Communist conspiracy against the world.

Some of the critics, especially veteran Russian Mensheviks and their American pupils, dismiss the idea of a democratic evolution in the Soviet Union or in the Communist party, because any such idea fails to take into account how inseparable the totalitarian outlook has been from the Bolshevik party: Bolshevik totalitarianism goes back allegedly to Lenin's fight over the party statutes in 1903, the year when the Russian socialists split into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Lenin then demanded that only active participants in the party's underground work should be recognized as party members, whereas the Mensheviks wished to grant membership to "sympathizers" as well. It was then, we are told, that the issue was decided in advance, the issue which looms behind the great upheavals of this century,

* Curiously enough, a critic in *The London Times Literary Supplement* (August 28, 1953) thinks that I have "tended to exaggerate the personal elements inherent in Stalinism."

behind the sequence of revolution and counter-revolution, behind the massive reality of Stalinist totalitarianism, behind the cold war, and behind the dangers most threatening the world. All these have their origin in that idea about party organization which Lenin embodied in his first paragraph of the party statutes over fifty years ago. Thus half a century of Russian and even world history is seen as springing from Lenin's head, from a single idea in his brain. Should one really carry one's contempt for "materialist determinism" as far as that?

The cold war propagandist conceals, cleverly and not so cleverly, his intellectual embarrassment or helplessness with the terms "totalitarianism" and "totalitarian." Whenever he is unable or mentally too lazy to explain a phenomenon, he resorts to that label. . . .

I should perhaps explain that I myself have occasionally applied this term to describe certain aspects of Stalinism—I have been doing this at least since 1932. But the term should be used carefully and sparingly. Nothing is more confusing and harmful than the habit of lumping together diverse regimes and social phenomena under one label. Stalinists have often lumped together all their opponents as fascists. The anti-Stalinist lumps together Nazis, fascists, Stalinists, Leninists, and just Marxists, as totalitarians, and then assures us that totalitarianism being a completely new phenomenon, it rules out even the possibility of any change and evolution, let alone quasi-liberal reform. A totalitarian regime, he claims, can never be reformed or overthrown from inside; it can be destroyed from the outside only, by force of arms, as Hitler's regime was.

The fact is that nearly all modern revolutions (the Paris Commune, the Russian revolutions of 1905 and 1917, the central European revolutions of 1918, the Chinese revolution of 1948-49) and even most democratic reforms, have come in the wake of war and military defeat, not as a result of purely internal developments; and this has been so even in non-totalitarian regimes. Yet it would be a striking mistake to treat totalitarianism metaphysically as a state of society's utter immobility, or of history's absolute freezing, which excludes any political movement in the form of action from below or reform from above. It is true, of course, that the chances of such action or reform were negligible under Stalin. But they have grown enormously since the critical moment, at the end of the Stalin era, when the crisis in leadership coincided with the accumulation of changes in the depth of society. In denying this, my critics imperceptibly abandon their extreme opposition to determinism and themselves adopt an utterly unrealistic brand of determinism. They, too, argue now that Russia's political future is predetermined, only that it is not the economic and cultural data—the fact that the Russian steppes and the wastes of Siberia are covered by thousands of new factories, that Russia's urban population has grown by

over forty million souls within a little more than twenty years, or that proportionately more young people attend schools in Russia than anywhere else in the world—it is not these facts that can determine Russia's political future, in the critics' view. It is the politics of the Stalin era and they alone—the single party system, the absence of free discussion, the leader cult, the terror of the political police, and so on—that are going to decide the shape of things to come. Their "determinism" amounts to this: politics is determined by politics alone, it is self-sufficient and independent of other fields of social life. To be sure, in my view the economic processes are of primary importance, but they are closely connected with cultural developments and the moral climate; they are dependent on the political circumstances and themselves have a powerful impact on those circumstances. The critics' pseudo-determinism is one-dimensional, whereas the much abused and "old-fashioned" Marxist determinism has at least the advantage that it tries to grasp reality as it is: multi-dimensional in all its aspects and dynamic.

A certain type of "left-wing" cold war propagandist, who has not yet had the time to shed the *infantile diseases of ex-Communism,* approaches the issue from a "Marxist" angle, and turns against my analysis the "weapon" of economic determinism. A break with the Stalin era and a democratic evolution, he argues, are excluded because they would go against the class or group interest of the privileged and ruling minority of Soviet society. The argument, be it noted, was first advanced partially by Trotsky, although Trotsky cannot be held responsible for the oversimplifications of the Trotskyites.

The managerial and bureaucratic class, it is said, has a vested interest in maintaining the economic and social inequality of the Stalin era. It must therefore preserve the whole apparatus of coercion and terror which enforces that inequality.

This argument assumes that there exists:

a) a high degree of something like class solidarity in the Soviet bureaucratic and managerial groups; and

b) that the ruling group is guided in its policies by a strong awareness of, and concern for, the distinct class interest of the privileged groups.

These assumptions may or may not be correct—in my view the evidence is still inconclusive. A weighty argument against them is that we have repeatedly seen the privileged and ruling minority of Soviet society deeply divided against itself and engaged in a ferocious struggle ending with the extermination of large sections of the bureaucracy. The victims of the mass purges of 1936-38 came mainly from the party cadres, the managerial

groups, and the military officers corps, and only in the last instance from the non-privileged masses. Whether these purges accelerated the social integration of the new privileged minority, or whether, on the contrary, they prevented that minority from forming itself into a solid social stratum is, I admit, still an open question to me.

In any case we cannot say beforehand to what degree the privileged groups may resist any democratic-socialist and egalitarian trend emerging in Soviet society. It may be that they will defend their privileges tooth and nail and fight any such trend with stubborn cruelty. But it is at least quite as possible that the "class solidarity" of the privileged minority should prove very weak, that its resistance to the democratic-socialist trend should prove half-hearted and ineffective, and that the first impulse for quasi-liberal reforms should come, as it has already come, from the ranks of the bureaucracy itself. This is not to say that one ought to expect democratization to be brought about exclusively by reform from above: a combination of pressure from below and reform from above may be necessary. Yet at a certain stage of development it is the quasi-liberal reform from above that may most effectively spur on a revival of spontaneous political action below or create the conditions under which such action may become possible after a whole epoch of totalitarian torpor.

But even if we assume, for the sake of the argument, that Soviet bureaucracy does represent a single social and political interest, it would still not follow that that interest must lie in the perpetuation of the extreme inequality and oppression of the Stalin era. That inequality was the direct outcome of a poverty of available resources which did not permit not merely an egalitarian distribution but even a distant approach to egalitarianism. As I have pointed out at greater length in "Russia, What Next?" a strong differentiation of incomes was the only way in which Russia could develop her resources sufficiently to overcome that initial poverty. In other words, the privileges of the managerial and bureaucratic groups coincided with a broader national interest. Yet, with the growth of productive forces, which makes possible an alleviation of the still existing poverty in consumer goods, a reduction of inequality becomes possible, desirable, and even necessary for the further development of the nation's wealth and civiliation. Such a reduction need take place primarily or mainly through the lowering of the standards of living of the privileged minority, but through the raising of the standards of the majority. In a stagnant society, living on a national income the size of which remains stationary over the years, the standard of living of the broad masses cannot be improved otherwise than at the expense of the privileged groups, who therefore resist any attempt at such improvement. But in a society living on a rapidly growing national income, the privileged groups need not pay, or need not pay heavily, for the rise in

the well-being of the working masses; and so they need not necessarily oppose the rise.

The privileged minority in the USSR has no *absolute* interest—it may still have a relative and a temporary one—in perpetuating the economic discrepancies and social antagonisms that were inevitable at a lower level of economic development. Nor need they cling to a political regime designed to suppress and conceal those antagonisms behind a "monolithic" facade. Stalinism, with its orthodoxy, its iron curtain, and its elaborate political mythology, kept the Soviet people more or less in the dark about the scope and depth of its own social divisions and cleavages. But with the phenomenal growth of Soviet wealth these divisions tend to become softened; and the orthodoxy, the iron curtain, and the elaborate mytholgy of Stalinism *tend* to become socially useless. Only inertia may still keep them in being for a time, but the inertia is bound to spend itself; and the open-eyed observer of the Soviet scene can hardly fail to see that it is already beginning to spend itself.

More than at any previous time in history the political evolution of nations depends now on international as much as on internal factors. Nowhere in the world does the danger and fear of war strengthen democratic institutions. It would be idle to expect that any democratic trend in the USSR, which would, in any case, have to contend against so much resistance, could be strengthened while a war-like mood prevailed in and outside the Soviet Union. Any further growth of international tension would most probably arrest the democratic trend and stimulate a new form of authoritarianism or totalitarianism. Since the Stalinist form has outlived its relative historic justification and since danger of war enhances the already strong position of the armed forces, that new authoritarianism or totalitarianism is likely to assume a Bonapartist form. A Soviet version of Bonapartism would in its turn increase the danger of war or perhaps make war unavoidable.

This trend of thought seems to have come as a shock to my critic. Mr. Aron whom I have already quoted poses a question: *"Pourquoi un régime Bonapartiste signifierait-t-il la guerre? Un général, qui s'efforcerait de liquider le terrorisme du parti, serait normalement enclin à un accord avec l'Occident."*[Why should a Bonapartist regime mean war? A general who tried to end the terrorism of the party would normally incline towards the West.] I re-read these sentences and rub my eyes: is it possible that they should have been written by a Frenchman, and a French "political philosopher"? "Pourquoi le régime Bonapartiste signifierait-t-il la guerre?" Why indeed *did* it signify that? And why does the assumption that a similar regime in Russia would also signify war seem so far-fetched? Because a

general "liquidating the terrorism of the pary" should in fact be peacefully-minded. But—the question must be asked— was not the domestic terrorism of the Jacobin party finally liquidated under Napoleon? And did not Napoleon project in a sense that terrorism onto the international arena?

No matter to what historical school we belong, Bonapartist or anti-Bonapartist, pro- or anti-Jacobin, we cannot deny the seeming paradox that, for all their domestic terrorism, the Jacobins conducted their foreign policy much more pacifically than Napoleon did, who in domestic affairs stood for law and order. Did not the warning against carrying revolution abroad on the point of bayonets come from Danton and Robespierre, the revolutionary terrorists? The Jacobins suppressed by means of the guillotine the domestic tensions which the revolution had brought into the open or had created, while Napoleon could deal with those tensions only by finding foreign outlets for them. To be sure, this was only one aspect of the problem—the other was the attitude of counter-revolutionary Europe and England—but it was a most essential aspect.

It will now perhaps be seen why a Russian analogy to this is not altogether unreal. A Russian general or marshal may install himself in the Kremlin, "liquidate the terrorism of the party," and have the most peaceful intentions towards the outside world. But his intentions may carry little weight compared with the circumstances in which he has assumed power. He will have inherited the most severe strains and stresses from the Stalinist or post-Stalinist regime. There will be tensions between town and country, between collectivism and individualism in the countryside, and between Russia proper, the Ukraine, Georgia, and the other outlying republics. Stalinism had almost continually suppressed these tensions by terroristic methods. This was precisely why it was on the whole pacific in its foreign policy. Stalin was preoccupied with his domestic problems; and his manner of dealing with them was such that, never being quite free from those preoccupations, he had to maintain an essentially defensive attitude towards the outside world. In 1948-1952, when Russia's immediate military preominance in Europe was undeniable, a Russian Bonapart emight have issued marching orders to the Soviet army—Stalin, despite his "Manichean-like attitude" and "messianic fervor," did not. Whatever the clichés of vulgar history writing and propaganda may say about this Stalin's domestic terrorism and cautious, "peace-loving" foreign policy were only two sides of the same medal.

If a Soviet marshal were to take power, he would do so under conditions of domestic disorder and acute international tension—in a more normal situation he would hardly have a chance. He would either find the apparatus of Stalinist terrorism smashed or he himself would have to

smash it in order to justify himself. He would thus be deprived of the old means for controlling and suppressing domestic tensions. The dangerous international situation would hardly allow him to deal with those tensions in a patient, slow reformist manner. Instability and insecurity at home would impart an explosive character to his foreign policy—he would be impelled to find foreign outlets for domestic tensions. Having started out with the establishment of law and order at home and with the most peaceful intentions towards the outside world, the Russian Bonaparte, like his French prototype, would be driven into unpredictable military adventure, in part because he would not be able to exercise domestic control through intense terrorism. He would probably prove to be just as much more bellicose than Stalin or Molotov and Malenkov, as Napoleon proved to be more bellicose than Robespierre and Danton.

I admit that I remain a determinist on this point: the ultimate course upon which a Soviet Bonaparte would embark would not greatly depend on his assumed personal inclination to come to terms with the West. He might be inspired by the most pacific intentions; he might even have his Peace of Amiens (over the meaning of which generations of historians would later argue); and yet he would in all probability be driven to war, even "aggressive" war, by a combination of international and domestic factors.

My critics' approach is more often than not dictated by their prejudice against Bolshevism in all its phases, pre-Stalinist, Stalinist, and post-Stalinist. From this prejudice they engage in ludicrously belated apologetics for Tsardom and argue at length about the progressive features of the Tsarist regime, which, if only it had existed till now, would have taken Russia much further ahead on the road of industrial and cultural progress than the Bolshevik revolution has done. From the same prejudice they are prepared to hail the advent of a Soviet Bonaparte. "Anybody, anybody is preferable to the Bolsheviks!" seems to be the maxim. Any talk about the proletarian democratic element in Bolshevism—an element strongly submerged yet genuine—seems to the critics to defy reality. Yet the vision of the angel of peace dressed up in the uniform of the Russian Bonaparte does not at all seem odd to them.

The alternative is still between a democratic evolution of Communism and some sort of a military dictatorship. This, it seems to me, is the basic, the *long-term* alternative. It has never occurred to me that the historic choice will be made very soon after Stalin's death. At any rate, the full "liberalization" of the regime or the full resurgence of the proletarian democratic tradition of Communism could not be a matter of a few months or even years. What the events that followed immediately after Stalin's death could show and have shown is that the alternative outlined above is real,

and that the impulses that may push the Soviet Union in one direction or the other are already at work and are already in conflict with one another. The long-term character of the prognostication frees me from the need to reply any further to those critics who point to the events of a few months to conclude that my forecast has been refuted. I can only express mild surprise at this naive disregard of the time factor.

This is not to say that we can ignore the connection between the short-term and the long-term developments, or that we have fixed our eyes so exclusively on the latter that the former have caught us unawares. Our prognostication made allowance for the short term prospects as well. In "Russia, What Next?" I wrote that besides the basic alternative—military dictatorship versus socialist democracy—there was still the possibility of "a relapse into the Stalinist form of dictatorship." I added: "A *prolonged* relapse into Stalinism is highly improbable" (p. 159 of the English edition). The adjective "prolonged" italicized in the original pointed directly, though perhaps too laconically, to the probability of a *short* relapse. Something like it has in the meantime occurred and is still in progress—but even this relapse has been only partial and vague and feeble, and it is being carefully concealed.

History has only opened a new chapter on Russia—let us patiently watch her as she fills the pages.

BUT ON OTHER TERMS . . .

Lewis Coser

I

Mr. Deutscher's article provides so welcome a relief from the tedious speculations, prophecies, and ritualistic expressions of horror which nowadays pass for analysis of Russian society in the pages of American publications, that one is tempted to relax into unqualified assent. Here at least is an effort to deal with Russian affairs in terms of social and economic trends rather than personality traits and devilish essences.

Yet, despite the brilliance and persuasiveness of his thesis, I am not convinced by much of it.

Mr. Deutscher is misled in part by a traditional method of analysis by which all of us who have been raised in a Marxist tradition have at times been affected, but which needs serious reconsideration if we are to understand Russian society—in fact all contemporary societies. There is no point here in going into a discussion of What Marx Really Meant, but it seems to me that throughout the greatest part of its history the Marxist movement has had a tendency to assume that an increase in productivity and economic production would of necessity lead to an increase of the social and cultural level, of class awareness and consciousness among the masses of the population. True, the more refined Marxist theorists were wont to remark that Marx had made a difference between "Klasse fuer sich" and "Klasse an sich," i.e., that he had stressed that classes would become history-making entities not automatically but only if and when they had become conscious of themselves. Yet in the practical day to day thinking of Marxist parties it generally was assumed that given a higher development of productive forces there would also follow a higher development of proletarian class consciousness.

This belief could clearly be vindicated by pointing to the realities of 19th Century Europe. Who could deny that the English worker at the end of the century was a very different man from the English worker at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution? Wasn't it indeed apparent that the development of social awareness, of cultural and political consciousness, in short, of cultivation which had taken place in Europe during the 19th Century was indeed rendered possible only on the basis of a rise in the development of the productive capacities of European industrialism? Marxists criticized capitalism for hampering the development of productive forces, yet they never dreamed of denying that it was this development which had been the necessary, though perhaps not sufficient, cause of the rise of the modern Labor Movement.

In essence, it would seem to me, Mr. Deutscher still follows this mode of analysis. He assumes that "the higher level of industrial and general civilization favors a gradual democratization of Soviet political life"—though he admits that temporary relapses into Stalinism are possible. Now, I submit that clinging to the 19th Century Marxist analysis in *this* respect, exhibits a disregard of what, to this writer at least, is one of the most important correctives or modulations which the 20th Century has forced us to make: THERE IS NO REASON TO ASSUME ANY KIND OF AUTOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN A HIGHER LEVEL OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND "GENERAL CIVILIZATION." Quite apart from the larger difficulty of talking of progress in culture in the same sense that one talks of progress in technology (by what measuring stick

does one judge whether culture is "more advanced" in the 20th than it was in the 18th Century or in the Fifth Century BC?) such an equation of industrial and cultural advances, such an assumption that technological progress must necessarily bring—even if through a few detours of history—greater human progress seems to me to ignore much of the evidence of recent history.

Indeed, have not large areas of the world experienced unprecedented industrial "progress" in recent decades without corresponding cultural "progress" or, to be more specific, without a corresponding development of working class awareness and consciousness? The rate of expansion of, say, the Manchurian economy under Japanese occupation was perhaps even more rapid than the advance of the Russian economy in the corresponding period, many "backward countries" have been moving toward industrialization during the past several decades, yet we fail to note any corresponding increase in self-awareness of the masses. We are therefore forced to recognize, I submit, that the 20th Century has evidenced a disjunction between technological development and working class awareness. It is with this fact that Mr. Deutscher, it would seem to me, does not adequately come to grips.

We learn from Mr. Deutscher that the Soviet Union has experienced a "vast educational progress" in the Stalinist period. Talking of "educational progress" in this connection seems to me to exhibit, again, a curiously 19th Century mode of thought. Indeed, the 19th Century assumed that increasing literacy would *ipso facto* bring in its wake an increasing ability to participate in democratic process. Yet have we not reason to learn from recent totalitarian developments, both inside and outside Russia, that literacy, far from necessarily favoring democratic trends may, on the contrary, be a precondition for the reign of the totalitarian elite? Since the arts of mass propaganda cannot be fully utilized in an illiterate population, illiteracy will be combated by totalitarian with at least as much fervor as by democratic regimes. An "educational progress" which makes millions able to read, but only the approved books, an "educational progress" based on indoctrination, fosters distorted images of reality which make it more rather than less difficult to understand the world in which one finds oneself. It isn't as if by increasing the educational level there is simply removed a veil that has heretofore prevented one from recognizing reality; it may very well be that in the course of the "vast educational process" the masses of Russian workers and peasants have been farther removed from an understanding of the reality in which they live. The untutored matter-of-fact common sense of the pre-Soviet Russian peasant clearly prevented him from understanding many of the crucial facts about the world in which he lived, but it can be doubted whether the world-view that the average Komsomol has acquired in the Russian schools is not considerably less realistic in crucial respects.

Rationality is not a tap that can be turned on at will. There is reason to believe that a population that has been subjected for decades to intellectual rape by the most refined methods of mass propaganda is unlikely to respond tomorrow with full-blown capacities for democratic self-government.

Mr. Deutscher believes that the level of Russian cultural development is today considerably higher than it was in Tzarist days. If one equates culture with literacy he is undoubtedly right, but if, as one must see, culture as intimately connected with human freedom, rationality and spontaneity, then, Russian culture is today less developed than it was before the revolution.

This leads me to a related point. The 19th Century belief that increasing class consciousness would more or less automatically follow in the wake of further industrial development rested on the tacit premise that further industrialization would allow wider and wider possibilities of organization, propaganda and socialist agitation. Only under these conditions could awareness be assumed to go together with economic development. YET THE CRUCIAL FACT ABOUT INDUSTRIALIZATION IN RUSSIA IS PRECISELY THAT IT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AT THE PRICE OF A COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION. The socialist tradition is practically non-existent in Russia today since the great bulk of the Russian working class, peasants only ten or twenty years ago, has never been allowed to come into contact with it. To the mass of Russian workers socialism simply means the present regime. They are culturally more isolated, more incapable of acquiring political knowledge, more incapable of learning about the socialist tradition than were the Russian workers at the turn of the century. To assume that a working class that has been effectively prevented from acquiring an independent awareness, that, for decades, has been effectively removed from any type of autonomous activity, can without a period of lengthy preparation, act in a politically democratic and autonomous way—is perhaps a tribute to one's socialist beliefs but not to rigor of analysis.

Mr. Deutscher reasons from the analogy of the great French Revolution: long before this revolution took place the bourgeoisie had already developed its political and social consciousness within the womb of the old society. Hence, he seems to argue, we can also expect that the Russian working class will have developed in analogous ways within the womb of Stalinist society. But this analogy cannot possibly hold true. In Stalinist society any kind of autonomous development of organization or consciousness is impossible. The bourgeoisie could develop its economic power and property forms within the structure of an absolutist society, but the Russian

working class is effectively barred from that kind of political organization which alone would allow it to develop its potentialities.

It is at this point that a more general observation needs to be made. One of the central difficulties in Mr. Deutscher's analysis, though it also makes for a certain attractive facility, is its underlying assumption that the bourgeois and socialist transformations of society can be seen as basically comparable. This, however, is not really so. The bourgeoisie could develop socio-economic forms before achieving political power; bourgeois relations of production existed before any bourgeois state. And later, bourgeois relations of production could continue to exist under a Bonapartist dictator who might cut the bourgeois off from immediate political power. But with socialism things are entirely different. The working class is property-less under capitalism; and it remains property-less under socialism. Once private property is abolished, once there is one or another form of collective or public ownership, the determination of economic power depends upon the control of political power. Everything now depends, not upon any private ownership of the means of production by one *or* another class, but upon who "owns" or controls the state; and the working class, or more generally, the large mass of the population, cannot even approach control of the statified industries unless there exists political democracy. That is why democracy, apart from any general humanitarian reasons, is literally indispensable for the achievement of socialism.

I have been recently engaging in several bouts with "Russian specialists" who, in a sort of inverted admiration for the Stalinist regime, have accepted that vision of the monolithic structure of Russian society which Russian apologists are wont to create. These analysts, I think, failed in the crucial task of analyzing, namely in discovering in which areas of social, economic and political life, the Soviet structure does indeed exhibit strains, tensions, crisis symptoms, that would allow one to predict the direction of possible changes. I thus do not at all believe that Russian society is simply a homogeneous, equilibrated and well-adjusted structure. Nevertheless, I am forced to reject the extremely simplified view of Deutscher which seems to rest on the premise that a working class can one day rise unstained, unsullied, unaffected by its recent history and triumphantly take over the helm of a socialist society.

II

There is still another aspect of Mr. Deutscher's view that needs discussion here. Mr. Deutscher does not seem to expect that a fundamental democratization of Russian society will come about through a political revolution, through mass-activity; he counts most of all on a "reform from

above." His case rests on the assertion that "the privileged minority in the USSR has no *absolute* interest . . . in perpetuating the economic development." He expects the privileged minority, and he will pardon me if I put his expectations in a somewhat crude way, he expects the privileged minority to commit suicide, to abolish its own privileges.

Mr. Deutscher hopes for some kind of reenactment of that famous night of August 4, 1789 when the French clergy and the nobility, priest and noble lords, or so at least the democratic legend has it, renounced upon the altar of the country their privileges and prerogatives. He apparently expects that at some point soon a Russian Duke d'Aiguillon or a Russian Viscount de Noailles will stand up demanding the abolition of the privileges of the bureaucracy and that the Russian equivalent of the Bishops of Nancy and of Chartres will demand the abolition of the tithes.

But what were the realities, as distinct from the legend, of August 4? The evening, Kropotkin writes, "had at first begun with panic, not with enthusiasm." A Committee of Inquiry had just reported that "on all sides chateaux are burnt . . . taxes and seignorial dues are done away with. The laws are powerless, the magistrates are without authority." Nobility and clergy acted only after they were presented with the frightening evidence of a spreading peasant jacquerie. Furthermore, even while sacrificing honorary rights and prerogatives they demanded the redemption of their more valuable feudal dues. They didn't commit suicide, but shrewdly adapted themselves to the realities of a revolutionary situation and tried to save as much from it as they possibly could.

In fact there is no historical precedent known to this writer in which a ruling class has voluntarily given up its privileges, except under the extreme duress of actual or threatening revolutionary development. I see no reason to expect the Russian ruling class to behave contrary to historic precedent.

I know that Mr. Deutscher argues there is no evidence as yet which impels him to conclude that there exists a Russian ruling class. He adduces as evidence the fact that individual members of this group have again and again been purged, eliminated, cast out, degraded. But this fact in itself proves very little. What is essential is not that the incumbency of various privileged positions in Russian society is apt to change rather rapidly, but the fact that the structure of the society is rigidly stratified and highly differentiated.

Marx once observed that if open access to privileged position would be the only test for the degree of democratization of a society, the Society of Jesus would have to be considered a most democratic institution. In other words, even if it should be proved that there still exists free access to

top positions in Soviet society this would in no way prove its democratic character. Even if every son of a worker can attain positions in the NKVD, a society terrorized by the NKVD is still a totalitarian and not a democratic society. But further, and more importantly, all recent students of Russian social structure have pointed to many tendencies making for the reduction of social mobility in the Soviet Union. To cite only one fact: the reintroduction of fees for studying in secondary schools and universities has led to increasing proportions of sons of bureaucrats and decreasing proportions of sons of workers and peasants attending these schools. To expect that the members of the bureaucracy will voluntarily forego the differential advantages which accrue to them and to their children from their position, to expect them to forego transmitting skills, connections and differential educational opportunities, seems, to me, unrealistic indeed.

Now Mr. Deutscher claims that as Russian society increases its wealth and the general level of living also increases, the differential privileges may no longer be sought after as eagerly in the future. But is he really prepared to argue that Russian national income will in the foreseeable future rise to such levels of abundance that differential access to the pool of wealth will lose its importance? Surely, one cannot believe that so sophisticated an analyst can be *that* naive. If most of the goods in Russia were "free goods" as, say, water is in the Eastern part of the United States, no competitive struggle over it would be likely to arise, but does one seriously need to discuss this alternative?

Mr. Deutscher, in addition, seems to believe that in Russian society economic and political developments proceed in an uncorrelated manner. Economic forces, he feels, will expand on their own and they will finally force political factors to adjust themselves to the economic trend. This again, I submit is a 19th Century view. In a statified economy, economic factors lose much of their autonomy. The growth of the economy will in part be determined by the policies of the ruling strata. The type of planning that is adequate to the maintenance of bureaucratic power is precisely a kind of planning that hampers that full development of economic forces of which Mr. Deutscher dreams. No sector of social life in Russia, least of all the economic sector, is free from the influence of political power. Politics, both foreign and domestic, necessarily primes economics in Russian society.

A related point needs still to be mentioned: Mr. Deutscher argues that bureaucracy and a strong differentiation in incomes developed in the Soviet Union because this was the only way in which Russia, given the initial poverty of the economy, could develop her resources. I am not prepared to argue, at present, this view of past history—though I disagree with it in important respects. What is more important in our context, however, would

seem the assumption that since an institution developed under one set of conditions, removal of these conditions will also undermine this institution. But genesis can never account for persistence. An institution may indeed have arisen out of a special set of circumstances, but history provides only too many cases in which a phenomenon has continued to exist long after it has outlived its initial raison d'être. Measures taken in times of war emergencies have a deplorable tendency to continue in peacetime; union officers who have attained special powers to deal with strike emergencies are known to maintain these powers long after the emergency is over. Bureaucratic power may originally be considered by the incumbents as purely instrumental, but in its exercise what was an instrumental value becomes a terminal value. This is not the place to discuss the classical description of bureaucracy by Max Weber and its complement by Robert Michels, but surely a modern analyst cannot afford to simply ignore the evidence that has accumulated in support of great parts of their thesis.

Space prevents detailed discussion here, yet so much can be confidently asserted, a bureaucratic group is not likely to abdicate its power, rights and privileges as long as it isn't forced to do so. The dominance of the Russian oligarchy may be ended in various ways but it will not be terminated by its self-immolation on the altar of democracy.

III

The preceding pages may seem to have been written in a spirit of utter pessimism as to perspectives of internal change in the Soviet Union. They are not meant to be read in this way. The writer does indeed believe that there are a number of serious and deep-going tensions and crisis symptoms in the Soviet Union, he rejects the facile assumption of a monolithic Russian society, which serves so well the purpose of the advocates of the Cold and Not-So-Cold-War, but he also feels it necessary to reject some of the over-optimistic conclusions that seem to stem from Mr. Deutscher's analysis. It is only through realistic assessment of the staggering tasks with which socialism is faced today in Russia and in the world at large that we are enabled to avoid a facile optimism which can turn only too easily into deep despair if things "don't pay off" immediately. Of the Russian working class it may well be said what Thomas Carlyle once said of America: "She will have her own agony, and her own victory, but on other terms than she is yet aware of."

AND CAN THERE BE PEACE? . . .

Henri Rabassiere

Mr. Deutscher's able paper raises a number of problems which certainly go far beyond the immediate purpose of his analysis; yet they go right to the heart of the question which prompts him and others to discuss the future of the Soviet system, namely, the possibility of co-existence between such a power and others. Strangely enough, all disputants seem to be agreed on one proposition—that developments inside the Soviet Union, whether through the viciousness of the Bolshevik ideology or the ambition of the members of the Politbureau, whether the greed of the ruling bureaucracy or the political harrassment of a (possible) Bonaparte, may bring war. Vice versa, those who feel that co-existence, or at least the absence of a shooting war between the major powers, might be possible over a number of years, base their argument on the assumption that such compulsive factors, projecting the inner tensions in the Soviet Union to the outside, are not powerful enough, or even may be waning in the structure of Soviet society.

Both sides to the controversy pursue their analysis as though the Soviet Union were a self-sufficient entity, living in a vacuum and becoming aware of its external enemies only when it suits her rulers to go to war. Least of all Mr. Deutscher needs to be reminded of the objections which the notion of "socialism in one country" provoked as soon as it was promulgated. Indeed, was it not Trotsky himself who pointed out that Stalinism was as much a consequence as it was a cause of isolation? Does not Marx, too, assume a (pardon me: "dialectical") interrelation of foreign and domestic affairs? Since Mr. Deutscher justly rejects the idea that Stalin personally created Stalinism, he certainly must count the pressure of Russia's foreign relations among the conditions which caused the rise of the bureaucracy, the degeneration of a socialist into a defense economy, the shifting of emphasis from consumer goods to means of production, the high rate of capital accumulation provided in the five-year-plans, the frantic drive to fulfill them in four years, in short the very exploitation which resulted in the serious stress of all economic, social and political relations and in the ruthless police methods used to overcome them, in the smashing of all resistance (technological or social) and of all nuclei of opposition. Other

conditions certainly were cooperating in bringing about the specific features of this dictatorship, but the threat of capitalist encirclement remained the constant justification of the system and of the most hideous acts of its terrorism.

It may be necessary here to open a parenthesis. I do not say that capitalistic encirclement was at all times an actual danger; my point is that the Russians at nearly all times considered it so. Whether real or imaginary, this threat had become an obsession with the ruling circles. Again, I do not say that in my eyes this nightmare justifies the terror: I do say that in Russian eyes it may appear to do so. Western observers in their self-righteousness usually take it for granted that the Russians alone can be the aggressors; viewed from Russia, the history of the last twenty years may be read quite differently, and the Russians in their own self-righteousness look at us with the same suspicions their policies arouse in us. Moreover, the mutual influence of foreign and domestic affairs also works the other way: once the structure of the political system has been geared to the demands of autarchy and isolation, its dynamism will engender more isolationism; tension abroad and tension within mutually intensify each other. It is idle to speculate which of them is more important or more basic; in any actual situation of history each country appears as a complex entity, shaped by its internal condition and external relations, and shaping its destiny in accordance with that situation.

Wars and imperialistic adventures start when powers seek more power, by annexing territory, by improving their frontiers or by requiring power positions—if only to deny such positions to other powers. Some powers may have additional reasons for going to war; as a Marxist, Mr. Deutscher knows at least two such reasons—namely the desire of Bonapartistic governments to export their domestic troubles, and the conflicts arising from capitalistic competition for markets and investment opportunities; historically older forms of power conflicts and expansion include dynastic wars, territorial disputes between nations, conquest of colonies for exploitation, and that most useless and reprehensible of all wars, the crusade. A number of the more brutal wars can be explained by economic necessity, in others whatever economic gains they brought to the victor were purely accidental. Rarely, however, did the ultimate motive find direct expression in conquest; to result in armed conflict, it had to become manifest in a power organization and its accompanying ideologies. War had to be prepared, conducted and willed by a class (or elite) which found militaristic, chauvinistic and expansionist patterns of power suitable for, or compatible with, its interests. However, the ruling classes are rarely united and aware of their common long-term interests, as Mr. Deutscher reminds the proponents of a

certain backwoods Marxism. The fight between various elites may result in democracy; it also may either accelerate or retard the course to war. The very common and honorable misconception, that democracies are by definition peaceful, is as old as the French revolution when Immanuel Kant made the amazing statement that republican governments in all countries would guarantee eternal peace. Today we say democratic for republican, but it is still the same illusion which stays unsupported by either historical facts or theory. Mr. Deutscher seems to subscribe to this belief with the qualifications that might be expected from a socialist. He seems to think that a democratized Soviet system need not covet foreign possessions; he also seems to deny the existence of classes in the Soviet Union, and hence equalizes democracy in Russia with socialism, which in his book is peace-loving by definition.

Be this proposition true or false, it is irrelevant. Given the interdependence of external and internal stresses, socialism is not possible in one country, not even one as big as the Russo-Chinese coalition empire; no definition of a classless society includes a country relying for its defense on a huge apparatus of specialists and managers in appointive, non-elective offices. Nor can a power organization as big and forceful as the Soviet state renounce foreign policy and deny itself the use of warlike means if its interests, opportunity or the nature of its position in the world indicate it. This is so, not because the rulers are evil-minded, power-hungry or forgetful of the common good, but because power itself is evil and contrary to the common good. Deutscher wishes to apply the materialistic interpretation of history—but are not organizations of power material forces too? Once they are set in motion, they develop a dynamism of their own, tend to perpetuate themselves and influence the course of history far beyond the period of their socio-economic usefulness. Did the dialectic stop its ineluctable course when Stalin died? After Stalin, Deutscher seems to think, the Russian state will assume one of the forms known to us from earlier historical experience—either democratic or, at worst, bonapartistic. But Stalinism was not just a deviation from a predestined course of the Soviet Power to democratic socialism. It was not just the instrument of transforming a backward into a highly industrialized society. It established a new type of state in a new type of society, neither capitalistic nor socialistic, neither democratic nor dictatorial in any older sense of the word, but totalitarian in the specific sense that all efforts are directed toward, and subject to, the attainment of higher efficiency for the nation in its struggle to surpass other nations in economic, military and political power. Such a society can leave a little more or a little less elbow room for the individual, depending on its natural wealth or poverty, backwardness or advanced technology. It can be gov-

erned by harsh or by lenient hierarchies, by stupid or by intelligent specialists; it can give its subjects no democratic rights at all or it may find advantage in letting them participate in the administration of their local or even of national affairs. All that need not change the totalitarian character of that society. A totalitarian democracy is just as thinkable as totalitarian dictatorships which so far have been our experience. But under no circumstances—not even after a "war of liberation"—can such post-Stalinist pseudo-democracy and pseudo-egalitarianism be imagined as a simple return to pre-Stalinist democracy.

In fairness, Mr. Deutscher comes very close to making this point himself. Arguing against the vulgar notions of some Neo-Marxists, he emphasizes the fact that recent impulses towards quasi-liberal reforms in the Soviet Union have come, not from the rank and file, but from the bureaucracy itself. Precisely! Inside the hierarchy, differences of viewpoint and position beget struggles for power and influence; honest divergencies on how best to manage the affairs of the nation and how best to manipulate opinion, reveal cracks and stresses in the Soviet economy and in its class structure. Managers and specialists identify themselves with the population groups, sectors of industry or cultural interests which have been entrusted to their care. This is the main source of deviations. One may argue that from where he sits, he can foresee deficient harvests unless the peasants get more free cash in their hands. Not that the peasants become articulate, but their manipulator asks for better techniques to make them deliver. Now it may be that his demand is compatible with the goals which the planners have set for other industries; then we get "democratization"; or it may be that—no matter how well the program of industrialization has been fulfilled and how far Soviet technology may have outstripped more capitalistic countries—security considerations demand a new wave of rapid accumulation. Then our farm spokesman will be a "traitor" and we get more terrorism. These periods of strenuous defense efforts and of relaxation alternate in cycles, just as under capitalism periods of accumulation are followed by periods of deceleration.

These cycles tend to bewilder Marxists and particularly ex-Bolsheviks who are interested in dubbing each new development either "rightist" or "leftist." The Soviet society has outgrown these classifications. The rightist and the leftist deviations usually develop simultaneously, and are liquidated simultaneously, too. Moreover, this usually is done whenever the technological deviationists tend to become spokesmen of real group or class interests (since Deutscher denies the existence of classes in the Soviet Union, I shall not develop this line here). The reins are pulled in more tightly, the apparatus executes a retrenchment operation, narrows its scope of pseudo-

democratic "activation" of popular organs and reestablishes its undisputed authority. In the process, incidentally, it might take up the suggestion which originally came from the opposition; what matters, however, is not this or that policy (as in a democracy of traditional type) but who carries it out. Has the Party, and in it the Org-apparatus, regained its authority over the deviationist managers of special sections? Then the rigidity can be relaxed again and a new cycle can begin. As the organizational center must at all times seek roots in the nation (it is not a simple police or military dictatorship as in a Banana republic), it will stretch out new tentacles to the right and left, encouraging wider participation of the lower bureaucracy or even of the people in the administration, until a time when again harsh necessity forces a new sacrifice of group improvements to the national interest. Thus a constant cycle of relaxation and tension creates factions and rejects them, attracts new managerial personnel into the whirlpool of the administration and destroys them. This is the mechanism of government in a totalitarian country. It is very different from either democracy or Bonapartism—the two alternatives alone Deutscher envisages for the Soviet Union, after a brief "relapse" into Stalinism.

The Western prejudice, that the "democratic" phase of the cycle may be more propitious to a conciliatory attitude in foreign relations, is without foundation in experience. Periods of belligerent behavior have accompanied both, conciliatory and harsh phases of the terror cycle; vice versa, conciliatory gestures abroad have not been hampered by either tension or relaxation within. At times, though, phoney steps towards democracy, even the adoption of a new Constitution, have been used to make a Popular Front policy and the wooing of foreign alliances more believable. Deutscher is absolutely right in pointing to Stalin's terrorism and his policy of peace as "two sides of the same medal." But he also says, and rightly so, that under Stalin Russia still was weak and backward. Should there not be a direct relationship between this relative weakness (in comparison with potential enemies) and a cautious foreign policy? Might not the picture be different when Russia is no longer backward and weak, but wealthy and "democratic"? There is no reason why any change in the Soviet society (which Deutscher assumes and the present writer does not exclude), should reduce rather than increase its aggressiveness, if that change means greater strength and more chances that aggressiveness might pay. Deutscher himself admits that at least certain forms of government (or certain groups of elites in the totalitarian society as I would rather say) might tend to provoke war. Are not nearly all new rulers of the Kremlin in a position, as to legitimacy, loyalty and popular roots, that resembles the position of Napoleon rather than that of Robespierre? To compare Krushchev with Robespierre, after

Stalin himself has been so compared, amounts to a gross desecration, and to compare the Bolsheviks of 1954 with the Jacobins of 1792 (who indeed feared the war) instead of those of 1794 (who organized the revolutionary armies and carried the wars of liberation to foreign countries) is an arbitrary misuse of history.

Except for these misleading parallels which Trotsky bequeathed to his disciples, Mr. Deutscher's method and analysis are far superior to those of his critics. It is all the more regrettable that he should have allowed some of our dearest prejudices of the Left to block the conclusions which, I think, follow from his insight into the possible development of Soviet society. Notably with respect to the possibility of peace, or co-existence, neither his optimism nor his pessimism seems to be warranted. Neither his "democratic" alternative, nor the "bonapartistic" variant must inevitably lead either to war or to peace. Mr. Deutscher has done a great service in opposing the so-called "Russian experts" who try to predict Molotov's next move in foreign policy from the disposition of chairs in the Kremlin. It is true that the Russian experts are in a sorry predicament; they have to make predictions with nothing to go by. Mr. Deutscher at least has developed a more intelligent method of looking at Russia; he has directed our attention to the social, economic and political trends which are far more important than the factions in the Presidium. This writer, who does not claim to be a Russian expert but has the habit of drawing upon history, therefore wondered why an able historian like Deutscher should have adapted the method of these experts to his Marxist concerns. It is customary among Marxists to speak of Bonapartism as a cause of war, mainly because Marx pointed out the particular mechanism by which such a government would stumble into a war; Bonapate was Marx's principle enemy in the 'Fifties of the last century; that does not exclude other mechanisms which play in the case of other types of government. Or does Deutscher maintain that the Franco-German war was avoidable? Or any subsequent war?

Since I am only concerned with the question of peace and war, I should like to conclude with a few assumptions which should suffice to assess the intentions of the Soviet Union as a great power. We must discard any crusading idea and admit evil intentions only to the extent that must be attributed to any disciple of Macchiavelli or, for that matter, to graduates of any school of diplomacy. We must assume that Soviet makers of policy are ardent patriots, intelligent schemers and rationally calculating experts with considerable experience, not easily swayed by considerations of ideology or by other irrational motivations (this distinguishes them from the fascist type of totalitarian dictators), but honestly endeavoring to aggrandize their country to increase its power in accordance with the conditions of the world balance of power and the opportunities it affords.

AS RECORDED BY TACITUS...

But he did not thereby create a belief in his patriotism, for he had revived the law of treason, the name of which indeed was known in ancient times, though other matters came under its jurisdiction. . . . Deeds only were liable to accusation; words went unpunished. It was Augustus who first, under color of this law, applied legal inquiry to libelous writings. . . . Soon afterwards, Tiberius, when consulted . . . as to whether prosecutions for treason should be revived, replied that the laws must be enforced. . . . It will not be uninteresting if I relate . . . the first experiments at such accusations, in order to explain the origin of a most terrible scourge, how by Tiberius's cunning it crept among us, how subsequently it was checked, finally how it burst into flame and consumed everything. ANNALS I, 72-73

In consequence of the suicide of Cornutus it was proposed to deprive informers of their rewards whenever a person accused of treason put an end to his life. . . . The motion was on the point of being carried when the emperor, with a harshness contrary to his manner, spoke openly for the informers, complaining that the laws would be ineffective, and the State brought to the verge of ruin. "Better," he said, "to subvert the constitution than to remove its guardians." Thus the informers, a class invented to destroy the commonwealth, and never enough controlled even by legal penalties, were stimulated by rewards. ANNALS IV, 30

And this was the most dreadful feature of the age, that leading members of the Senate, some openly, some secretly, employed themselves in the very lowest work of the informer. One could not distinguish between aliens and kinfolk, between friends and strangers, or say what was quite recent, or what half-forgotten from lapse of time. People were incriminated for some casual remark in the forum or at the dinner-table, for every one was impatient to be the first to mark his victim, some to screen themselves, most from being, as it were, infected with the contagion of the malady. ANNALS VI, 7

THE AGE OF THE INFORMER

Such is the nature of the operations of the Communist party that all evidence about its key work must necessarily come from informers—that is, from those who have seen it from the inside. As Burnham points out, the pejorative connotations of that word, much exploited by the Communists, are completely inappropriate in this case. The highly dangerous Communist conspiracy is "neither a loyal company of Robin Hood nor a cheap gang of petty crooks." Yet, those most opposed to "informers" are often intellectuals whose profession it is to inform and be informed, and who fight for freedom of inquiry in every direction but this.

—Robert Gorham Davis in *The New Leader,* May 10, 1954.

It shall be the duty of every member of the armed forces, to report to his commanding officer any information coming to his attention which indicates that the retention of any member of the armed forces is not consistent with the interest of national security.

—New "loyalty regulations" just announced by Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson.

Lewis Coser

Few governments have dispensed with the services of spies and stool pigeons. No system of police has ever functioned without the aid of informers. The Mogul emperors reinforced their system of rule with an army of informers who entered the houses of citizens twice daily in the guise of scavengers. It may be doubted whether Napoleon's rule could have been maintained without Fouché's army of spies and informers. What distinguishes our age, however, is that the informer has now, for the first time, been extolled as a model whom others should emulate.

Earlier systems of rule utilized the informer, yet never veiled their contempt for him as a person. His was "dirty work"—necessary perhaps, yet work which entitled him to nothing but pay and contempt. The reasons for this are obvious enough. As Murray Hausknecht points out in this DISSENT, no human and social relationship is possible without a certain minimum of trust. But the informer is the anti-social type par excellence because he

breaks that fundamental law of mutual trust on which society—any type of non-totalitarian society—must rest. That is why the folklore of every culture includes spies and informers among its most abhorred types, why the popular imagination has always regarded the informer from Judas to Azev with a particularly horrified fascination. Cain, the murderer of his brother, and Judas, the betrayer of his brother, are excoriated in the Christian imagination precisely because their acts strike at the very root of community.

The term "apostate" is not properly applied to a person who, in the course of his development, is rapidly changing his religious or other (political, juridical, philosophical) convictions; not even if this change occurs not in a continuous manner, but suddenly and in a rupture-like fashion. Rather is the apostate a man who, even in his new state of belief, is spiritually living not primarily in the content of that faith, in the pursuit of goals appropriate to it, but only in the struggle *against the old faith and for the sake of its negation. The affirmation of the new content is, with him, not undertaken for its own sake, but is only a continual chain of acts of revenge against his spiritual past—a past which actually keeps him in fetters and with respect to which the new content functions merely as a possible point of reference from which he negates and rejects the old one. Therefore the apostate, considered as a religious type, is the extreme opposite of the "reborn" for whom the new content of faith and the corresponding new central life-process as such are significant and valuable. Friedrich Nietzsche has correctly cited a passage in Tertullian as an extreme formulation of this apostate's* ressentiment: *according to Tertullian a main source of bliss for those in heaven is said to consist in seeing the Roman persecutors burning in hell. Also Tertullian's dictum* "credibile est, quia ineptum est, certum est, quia impossibile est—credo quia absurdum." (*It is credible because it is useless, is certain because it is impossible—I believe because it is absurd*") *is a typical expression of his apostatic* ressentiment; *it is an apt summing up of his method of defending Christianity, a defense which is but a continual revenge against the values of classical antiquity.*

[Translated from Max Scheler, *Vom Umsturz der Werte*, vol. 1 (*Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen*), 1922, p. 84.]

I

Mr. Robert Gorham Davis, president of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, seems to desire a certain modification of this

tradition. Victim of a semantic confusion so obvious it is hard to believe that he, a distinguished literary critic and professor of English, could be unaware of it. Mr. Davis would have us believe that since intellectuals are interested in *information* they should be sympathetic—or at least more sympathetic than they previously have been—to *informing*. But surely Mr. Davis must be aware that there is a world of difference between asking a man for information and reporting one's knowledge of a man's opinion to the police, knowledge one has acquired in a relationship based on an implicit assumption of mutual trust. Without asking our fellows for help and information we could not carry on social living; but in a society or group in which every man to whom we speak is a potential or actual informer living becomes impossible. An increase in *information* suggests an increase in the capacity of human beings to order their collective life in rational terms; an increase in *informing* connotes the breakdown of social values.

Mr. Davis, as well as his co-thinkers on the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, may reply that these are extraordinary times; that in order to protect us from the threat of totalitarian spies and agents we must discard squeamish considerations of decency. The argument is familiar, though most of the time it is attributed to Bolsheviks: you can't make an omelette. . . .

Very well, it is true, you can't make an omelette. . . . But Mr. Davis and other liberals who think along his lines have gone far beyond any expedient measures of self-defense. Suppose we grant that under certain circumstances it might be necessary to deviate from the employment of strictly "moral" means in order to prevent the infiltration of totalitarian espionage agents. But that is quite another matter from making a virtue out of a necessity—from raising *informing* to the honored status of *information*. There is a gulf between expedient recourse in special circumstances to the service of a blackguard and the readiness to attribute desirable qualities to a blackguard. And it is just this latter that has recently been happening in America—to the point, indeed, where the informer, formerly a shabby shady figure in the political underground, has been raised to the level of a national hero, a Representative Man. We make the informer into a morally superior creature, we set him up as a model for our children, we employ him in our educational institutions and teach our children to admire him. Mr. Budenz, he of the elastic memory, has become a professor; Mr. Philbrick recently had a Day accorded him by the state of Massachusetts.

One reason so many American liberals turned against the Stalin regime was the revelation that it had developed a universal spy system in which children were called upon to inform on their parents and husbands on their

wives. Yet it is a little appalling that a man like Robert Gorham Davis—a good and sensitive man, a man who likes democracy—should feel called upon to defend informing on grounds other than the most desperate expediency. And we can only wonder if there will be much dissent from his opinion by his colleagues of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom.

II

Mr. Wilson, who apparently knew about the possibility of assimilating *informing* into *information* before Mr. Davis wrote for *The New Leader,* now declares that it is the duty of every sailor, soldier and airman to spy and inform on his buddy. He has, in short, made standard for the armed services that pattern of behavior which first aroused such indignation when it was discovered to exist in Russia.

Military doctrine has always stressed that the essential basis for the effectiveness of an army is a feeling of solidarity on the part of the men; coercion and discipline do indeed characterize all modern army organizations yet without a minimum of solidarity even the most rigid discipline could not insure cohesion. (Just as without a minimum of solidarity and consensus among the citizens no political structure could possibly be maintained.) Thus what Secretary Wilson has set up as the guiding standard for the army and what the administration legislates to be desirable behavior in civilian life is indeed behavior which must corrode the very basis of social and political relations. The glorification of the informer, as the excerpts from Tacitus may further illustrate, presages the decline and fall of liberal civilization. Mr. Malenkov may indeed nod approvingly and repeat—the devil quotes scripture—Marx's saying: "well done, old mole."

III

But Stalinism is a special problem; the Communist Parties are international conspiracies; they cannot be fought by the usual political methods.

We anticipate this counter-argument, and grant that there is something, but not very much, to it. In so far, for example, as the problem is one of espionage and counter-espionage, it does not, in any significant way, involve anyone but those people in government concerned with planting and/or catching spies. If Budenz knew of any actual spies and could offer some credible evidence that they were spies, then surely no one but Stalinists and their dupes could complain, or even be interested in complaining. But that is not the issue. For what a good many people, Budenz and others, have

been doing is implicating people who were once, actually or allegedly, involved in the Stalinist movement during the 1930's; people who have frequently left it years ago; people who are made to suffer for their mistakes —and yes, for their idealism—of years ago. When a former member of the Communist Party identifies a college professor as some one who belonged to the party fifteen years ago, what has that to do with espionage or conspiracy? It has to do only with the fact that some young people were once moved by the miseries of the depression era to act politically; and that then they made the tragic mistake of thinking that Stalinism had something to do with socialism (a misidentification, by the way, that a good many people do their best to keep alive.)

IV

> ***There is no malice like the malice of a renegade.*** **(Thomas Babington Macaulay.)**

Not all informers, of course, are renegades, nor are all renegades informers. We do not apply the term indiscriminately to all former members of the Stalinist (or any other) movement, nor to those who having broken write political attacks upon it. Yet in a period which has produced the Budenz' and Chambers'—to cite only the cruder types—there seems to be a certain justification in treating informers and renegades in the same context.

As the boxed excerpts from two distinguished German sociologists, Max Scheler and Georg Simmel, make clear, one does not become a renegade simply by changing one's opinions, even if one does so in an abrupt fashion. What characterizes the renegade is the continual chain of acts of revenge which he directs against his own past. Far from retaining a certain respect for at least the motives that led him to commit the mistakes of his youth, he must continually besmirch himself as he was and therefore, in a sense, as he is. To attest to his present trustworthiness he must betray his own history.

Now a man may honorably grow out of beliefs and attitudes he formerly held—it is certainly good, for example, that many people who were once Stalinists no longer are. But the renegade frequently attributes to himself motives even worse than those he actually had: he makes himself his own scapegoat. He cannot face himself, he hates himself and therefore— denounces his former associates. But no man can obliterate his own biography; one can only face it.

Renegades and informers are useful to policemen. Some will say that there are times when they must, like it or not, be used by others as well. With this opinion we do not, at present, wish to argue. But what is appal-

ling, and a sign of the decay of liberal values, is that informers should have any appeal to intellectuals who speak in the name of cultural freedom.

"He [the renegade] exhibits a characteristic loyalty to his new political, religious, or other party. The awareness and firmness of this loyalty (other things being equal) surpass those of persons who have belonged to the party all along. In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Turkey, this went so far that very often born Turks were not allowed to occupy high government positions, which were filled only by Janizaries, that is, born Christians, either voluntarily converted to Islam or stolen from their parents as children and brought up as Turks. They were the most loyal and energetic subjects. The special loyalty of the renegade seems to me to rest on the fact that the circumstances under which he enters the new relationship have a longer and more enduring effect than if he had naively grown into it, so to speak, without breaking with a previous one.

As far as it concerns us here, faithfulness or loyalty is the emotional reflection of the autonomous life of the relation, unperturbed by the possible disappearance of the motives which originally engendered the relation. But the longer these motives survive, and the less seriously the power of the pure form alone (of the relationship itself) is put to test, the more energetic and certain is the effect of faithfulness. This is particularly true of the renegade because of his sharp awareness that he cannot go back: the old relationship, with which he has irrevocably broken, remains for him, who has a sort of heightened discriminatory sensitivity, the background of the relation now existing. It is as if he were repelled by the old relationship and pushed into the new one, over and over again. Renegade loyalty is so strong because it includes what loyalty in general can dispense with, namely, the conscious continuance of the motives of the relationship. This continuance here fuses more permanently with the formal power of the relationship itself than in cases without contrasting past and without absence of alernative paths, of return, or in other directions."

[From Georg Simmel, "Faithfulness and Gratitude," in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel,* Kurt H. Wolff, ed. & tr. Free Press, 1950, pp. 383-384. Reprinted by permission.]

ANXIETY COMES TO THE AUTO CAPITAL

Frank Marquart

In the Spring number of DISSENT Lewis Coser wrote:

> Granted that we are not soon likely to repeat the catastrophe of the 1930's. Yet what matters for an understanding of the mood of the nation is the fact that hundreds of thousands of people, perhaps millions, cannot be sure that they will be working next month; that many more can be sure they will not be working full weeks; that slowly the prospect of pink slips and grey faces seems real again. No one wants it; everyone dreads it; but . . . there is a strong feeling in the air that once again we are being shaped by those mysterious forces of capitalist society which can bring misery or sometimes plenty, but never a sense of human autonomy and decision.

I quote this passage because it is so appropriate to what is taking place in Detroit today. By now it is widely known that this motor city is listed by the Labor Department as a "distressed labor area"; that 140,000 workers are unemployed here; that unemployment compensation checks are terminating at the rate of about 2,500 a week; that, to cite but one example, the Dodge plant now employs only about 10,000 workers as compared to 30,000 last year; that many other plants are not working full weeks; that, finally, the auto manufacturers were far off the beam last December when they predicted prosperity would return with Spring and the robins.

The change from boom to recession is harassing workers unfortunate enough to be laid off, and is rapidly altering the attitudes and feelings of those still lucky enough to have jobs. For it must be remembered that during the past ten or twelve years auto workers have by and large enjoyed boom times, thanks to the war, the huge post-war backlog demand for cars, and later, Korea. During this long stretch of "permanent war economy" auto workers had prosperity, except for relatively short spells marked by strikes, rapid production conversion, and the recession in 1949. For almost a full decade living standards were geared to full pay checks, often with plenty of overtime thrown in.

"Since the war we bought a washing machine, a refrigerator, television. We paid down on a home, and have a car that's less than five years old," a Chrysler worker said. And what is true of this man's family holds for

thousands of other auto workers' families in the metropolitan Detroit area. Thanks to the war and the installment plan, "workers never had it so good." But considering all the bills that had to be paid, the weekly pay check lasted only till the next one was due, and often not that long. Workers with considerable seniority, and therefore less subject to short layoffs, could continue their payments and even accumulate a little nest egg; but younger workers, those "last hired and first laid off," found it more difficult to meet their financial committments regularly and consequently were eager to work all the overtime they could get. Feuds among workers over how to share overtime tested the ingenuity of those shop stewards and plant committeemen called upon to work out a settlement. Although no survey was ever made to estimate how many workers held down two jobs, the number was not inconsiderable. Moreover, many wives got jobs in factories for the first time, not because they yearned for the assembly line or the punch press, but because, as one of them related: "My husband and I want to get our things paid for before the depression comes."

The feeling that the boom would some day end in a bust was general. Not even when he worked overtime or held down two jobs did the auto worker feel a sense of long-range security. Older workers never got over the "depression psychosis" developed back in the awful days when Detroit was known as "The City of the Dead." New workers attracted to Detroit by high wages also had misgivings about the boom, fearing that "this is too good to last." How realistic those fears were can be seen today, as old and young line up at unemployment compensation offices. So serious have layoffs become in some auto plants that not only young workers are hit, but also employees with up to 25 years of service.

In these days of inflated prices, the effects of a layoff are felt immediately. Bills and installment payments geared to full pay checks can't be met with unemployment benefits equal to less than half of a week's pay. Writing to his local union, a foundry worker said: "I have been out of work for more than two months now and for the time being I am up in my rent, but I don't know how long it will be before I get behind. I have been pawning my clothes, trying to carry on. With bills on all sides, and most of my clothes gone, you can see where I stand."

Asked what happens to the members of his union when they are out of work for four months or more, the president of a UAW-CIO local replied:

"Slowly but surely the majority of them go broke. They have exhausted their savings and their unemployment compensation is fast running out. The best they can hope for is a handout from the Welfare Department." Getting welfare is not pleasant and most workers resort to the ordeal only when driven to do so by sheer need.

WHEN A JOBLESS WORKER HAS DIFFICULTY getting on Welfare or drawing his unemployment benefit check, or is faced with any other pressing hardship problem, he goes to his union for help. During the boom he was usually too busy after working hours watching his television, taking his family out for a drive, or having a bull session with his cronies in the neighborhood beer garden. He seldom had time for a union meeting, and since he was not beset by problems about which the union could help him, he saw no reason to attend meetings or other union affairs, except maybe the annual dance or picnic. Local unions with a membership as high as 25,000 would sometimes have to suspend business meetings for lack of a quorum—150 members constituting a quorum. "You always see the same people at meetings—the same officers, shop committeemen, chief stewards, and the same union politicians . . . the card carriers don't attend, and they are in the vast majority," a shop reporter wrote in his union paper in 1950.

But today many union members who a year ago did not even know where their union hall was located, are attending meetings. They come because they are out of work and hope to learn from the union officers when they might be called back to their jobs. Or they come because they have some pressing personal problem of the kind that mushroom during an economic turndown: repossession of consumer items, garnishments, payment delinquencies on cars and appliances, rent evictions, mortgage foreclosure on homes. Moreover, the union serves as a place where the worker can find some release from his frustrations. He can take the floor, denounce some welfare official who tried to blackjack him into paying back rent when he needed his remaining few dollars to buy clothes for the kids. Or he can sound off at his union officers for allegedly not getting him back to work in line with his seniority, ending his castigation with, "What the hell am I paying my dues for, anyway?" Or he can nod assent and applaud vigorously when his union officers tee off on the Eisenhower Administration for its do-nothing policies and its trickle down economic theories "which favor the rich at the expense of the poor." In his hour of need, after months of unemployment, when he is broke, pursued by collectors or irritated by some welfare means test, the worker has a place to turn for help—his union. In his union he feels a sense of protection, a sense of belonging in an otherwise hostile world. The union cannot, to be sure, solve all his economic problems, but it usually can mitigate some of them by persuading the creditor to hold off for a spell, by finding a way to get around welfare red tape—and so on. Addressing a meeting of unemployed members, a union officer said:

"Your union officers have tried every way to get the ball rolling to help our unemployed and needy members. We have met with the governor of the state and the mayor of our town; we have talked to the banks as well

as to the loan sharks; we have talked to the Detroit Welfare Department, and to the Salvation Army. We begged and pleaded, pleaded and begged for the sake of our unemployed workers. We got promises from politicians for public works and we know that such public works are coming soon. We have been able to stem the tide of repossessions of homes, furniture, and other items of workers' ownership on which payments have not been met. . . ."

In addition to having to cope with the vexing problems that beset jobless workers, local union officers and especially shop committeemen and stewards must stay on guard to protect working conditions in the shop. A recession is a time of stiff competition in the auto industry, and management is engaged in a feverish drive to cut labor costs. Labor costs are cut not only by the installation of expensive automation equipment—like, for example, the General Motors 70-foot-long machine tool operated by one man which will perform 12 different jobs on an engine block—work ordinarily done by 10 men. Labor costs are also cut by mean, petty chiseling tactics—such as shifting a man out of a work group and demanding that the remaining men perform the regular amount of production; by eliminating five minutes wash-up time before the whistle blows; by taking away long established smoking and other privileges; by refusing stewards the right to leave their job in order to investigate a grievance.

Such chiseling is always stepped up during a slump, when commercial competition sharpens and unemployment grows. Encouraged by the surplus labor market, management "cracks down" by ordering supervision to cut labor costs, with the result that foremen and superintendents use all the old tricks and think up new ones to "increase output per man hour"—the stock phrase for speedup.

"You know how it is with workers in the shop—in time they learn how to cut corners, how to get the work out faster so that they can take maybe ten minutes out of the hour to loaf and find relief from job monotony. In time supervision sees that the men don't have to work every minute to get out the required production. Pretty soon some little engineering change is made on the job and supervision calls for a new time study and ups production out of all proportion to what the engineering change should call for," said the president of a Chrysler local.

"Our agreement clearly says that a foreman is not to work on production but should only supervise production, yet time after time foremen do jobs that ought to be done by production workers. Naturally the guys resent this because every hour of work done by a foreman means an hour of work lost to a production worker. Last week when that happened the men stopped working and just stood there, watching the foreman buck

production. For that they got a disciplinary layoff," a chief steward explained.

"Although our agreement allows chief stewards all the time they need to investigate and settle grievances, supervision is forever trying to reduce the time needed to process grievances and to keep the steward working on the job. Last week one of our stewards got fired for taking up a legitimate grievance and when the men in his group—about 30 of them—protested, they were given a two-day layoff penalty," a local union vice president wrote in his shop column.

Reduce the number of chief stewards, or, if that can't be done, reduce the time allowed for processing grievances—this is one of management's perennial objectives. Every little gain made in this objective pays off two-fold: first by absorbing more of the steward's time on production, and then by diminishing the benefits that accrue to workers by an adequately functioning representation system in the shop. One could fill pages listing examples of the guerrilla warfare which goes on in the shops today—and which should provide a rich field of exploration for industrial sociologists, if they ever get around to it.

WHAT WITH THE STRUGGLES IN THE SHOP and the tribulations of the unemployed, discontent is mounting in the ranks of the auto workers; they are uneasy, resentful, in a militant mood; they don't like what is going on at present and they fear the future. The union's top leadership seeks to channel that discontent and militancy behind the CIO's political program. This can be seen from the resolution drawn up by the UAW's General Motors Council. After calling upon the union to "concentrate collective bargaining strength toward winning the guaranteed annual wage in 1955," the resolution urges mobilizing "Maximum political strength toward electing those representatives whose attitudes and actions will reflect a desire to building peace and plenty for all the people." By representatives who "desire to build peace and plenty for all the people" the UAW means labor-endorsed Democratic Party candidates.

At the bargaining councils, at national, regional, state and local educational conferences: by means of the union's monthly educational organ, *Ammunition,* and its monthly publication *The United Automobile Worker,* plus a steady stream of pamphlets, news releases and policy statements—the UAW leadership seeks to indoctrinate its members with official policy and program. How well does the UAW succeed in "educating" its more than one million membership to the union's over-all policies? Naturally, the union's international representatives, local officers and many active secondary leaders in the shops—in sum, those members who regularly attend conventions, conferences and meetings—know in general what the

union's program is about. But the overwhelming majority of the members seem to have only the vaguest notion of what the union's program is, for the majority never go to conventions and conferences, never or seldom attend meetings; concentrate on the sport page of their daily paper far more diligently than on the policy statements in their union paper; watch their favorite television show instead of participating in union classes. In characteristic American fashion, auto workers are "pragmatic unionists" not too much concerned about their union as a "design for progress," but rather regarding it as an organization to which they pay dues and from which they expect returns in the form of better wages, a greater degree of job security, improved working conditions. Recently nearly a hundred members of a UAW local were asked what aims they thought the union should pursue to combat unemployment. Some of the replies, of which the following are samples, fell far short of the lofty goals incorporated in UAW resolutions:

> Lower the age retirement. There's no sense letting guys work till they're 68 when thousands of younger men are out of work.
>
> Get rid of the women in the shops. Too many women working while their husbands are working too. Why should two people in a family work when a lot of guys who are the sole support of their families can't find jobs?
>
> Stop giving so much stuff to foreign countries. Let's take care of our own people before we save the world.
>
> We need more defense contracts. Making plane parts, tanks, jeeps and army trucks would take up the slack in employment.
>
> Make automobile companies stop bringing more labor to Detroit by advertising for help in other states.

The fact that many of the replies were incongruous with UAW policy in no way detracts from the auto workers' loyalty to their union. Over 90 per cent of the replies were emphatic in declaring support to the union. But then this kind of support was demonstrated again and again in NLRB elections for the union shop.

SIMILARLY, THE AUTO WORKERS can be counted on to support PAC-endorsed candidates. If a survey were conducted today it would show that the auto workers overwhelmingly favor the Democratic Party, and that they will vote for Democratic Party candidates this Fall. CIO Political Action Committee representatives in the Detroit area report that the recession is raising the political receptivity of auto workers. "It's less difficult to get workers to run for precinct delegates in the Democratic Party, and to get volunteers to do ward and precinct duty, to get petitions signed, and so forth," a PAC official said, and then added, "We can safely predict

Democratic victories in all Michigan auto centers this Fall; the workers know what a mess the Republicans have made of things. . . ."

Yes, the majority of the UAW members will, without a doubt, vote for Democratic Party candidates this Fall. But what can one conclude from this? It's so easy to jump to conclusions about "worker attitudes." Actually, attitudes vary among workers in the same local, and for that matter, in the same shops or departments. Moreover, attitudes change, and what they happen to be at any given period depends on whether or not the worker has a job, how much he can earn in a week, the policies of supervision in the plant, and finally, what future prospects the worker thinks are in store for him and his family.

Huckleberry Finn observed that ". . . . a body can see and don't see at the same time." To judge union moods and attitudes one must see more than meets the eye. Thus, delegates attending a UAW conference will applaud vigorously when they hear Walter Reuther say: "We of the UAW have said many times over that we are not a narrow economic pressure group trying to get something for ourselves at the expense of the rest of the community." Yet back in the local union which elected those delegates, there will be department meetings called to straighten out seniority tangles, each group fighting to erect a seniority fence around their jobs to keep out other workers.

A chief steward will enforce the union's FEPC provisions against discrimination in the shop, but back in his community he might be seen serving on the Property Owners Association, seeking to devise a way to keep members of some minority group from moving into the neighborhood. Some workers will shout that "the union has no business messing around in politics," and later, when attending a meeting, will demand to know why the CIO does not organize a caravan of the unemployed and demonstrate before the State Capitol. In one breath workers will denounce war, and in the next breath advocate more defense work for Detroit. To get something off his chest, a worker will lambast the union leadership from top to bottom, and later in a conversation he will relate gleefully how he demolished the anti-union arguments of some dumb neighbor.

While it is true that one must guard against too hasty generalization, nevertheless anyone who has been around a UAW hall for the past several years can easily detect a distinct change in the mood and temper of union members. Compared to what it was a year ago, the prevailing mood is one of increased hostility toward the employers, toward the Eisenhower Administration, toward Republicans generally. This hostility stems from fear, the fear that we are being caught up in some dangerous drift—a drift of which short work weeks, layoffs, overstocked sales rooms, automation, McCarthyism, the H-bomb, and Indochina are ominous signs.

AMERICAN NOTEBOOK
Some Brief Comments On the Domestic Scene

1. Mental Hospitals and Social Theorists

Bernard Rosenberg

A short time ago there appeared a 126-page monograph modestly entitled "Psychosis and Civilization" and written by Herbert Goldhamer and Andrew Marshall. This rather specialized statistical study, which would ordinarily be discussed only in the technical journals, was reviewed, somewhat surprisingly, in *Commentary* (December, 1953) by Nathan Glazer, who voiced an unqualified admiration for the work. I say, somewhat surprisingly, because *Commentary* in its "Study of Man" department often criticizes social science research and seldom applauds it. That Glazer should have felt so enthusiastic about this little book is cause for a certain curiosity.

"Psychosis and Civilization" is, within limits, an admirable job. It happens, however, that the hypothesis of its authors—that the rate of insanity is now no greater than it was a century ago—remains unproved. It remains unproved, not because they have failed to explore all the *available* data, but because it is an unprovable hypothesis. One cannot determine with any degree of accuracy the actual incidence of psychosis, and to be guided solely by the rate of first admissions to mental hospitals, as Goldhamer and Marshall have been, is nearly as misleading as to judge our crime rate by the prison population.

But putting such objections to one side for a moment, and assuming that Goldhamer and Marshall do show that the frequency of psychosis is constant, it is worth our while to see how variously such a dubious conclusion can be interpreted. For example the authors say, "Our findings give us warrant for emphasizing not that mental health is just as good today as it was in the past, but rather that mental health was just as bad in the past as it is now." However, when these findings are popularized and politicized the emphasis, especially in *Commentary,* is reversed. Then it appears that since we will always have the mad with us, there is nothing so particularly stressful about our society as to derange a large percentage of Americans. The appeal that a highly vulnerable piece of social research has for the politically complacent is not hard to understand.

Glazer paraphrases the authors—up to a point; and thereby does them an injustice. He writes:

> All we can conclude, they say, is that there has been no great change in the conditions causing psychosis in this country in the past hundred years. . . . Another conclusion, they point out, is compatible with these results: that is, that in psychosis we deal with a condition which is independent of environmental circumstances, a condition dependent on heredity or physiological aberration, which, like some physical diseases, strikes a certain proportion of the population.

Goldhamer and Marshall do say something like this, but they add something else which Glazer fails to mention:

> Theories that view the functional psychoses as resulting from repressions of basic human drives and as the consequence of trauma developing in early intimate personal and familial relationships, may possibly be thought of as being more especially consistent with our findings.

This is acadamese, of course. Yet it points clearly enough to environmental factors and away from hereditarianism.

To misappropriate the Goldhamer-Marshall book in support of a genetic theory of psychosis, even one that reinforces our self-satisfaction, is to make an unwarranted deduction based on fragmentary evidence. The authors speak of a tendency, sometimes referred to as a law, according to which the probability that disturbed persons will be hospitalized is inverse to their distance from a mental hospital. Those farthest removed from psychiatric centers are not necessarily the most immune to breakdown, but they are least likely to be institutionalized. In Arkansas there are only two mental hospitals and in that state the official rate of psychosis is low. In Massachusetts there are excellent facilities for mental patients and the records indicate a correspondingly high rate of psychosis. Does anyone care to argue that there is something about Arkansas—their physique, their hormonal balance, the amount of oxygen in their brains—which decisively differentiates them from residents of Massachusetts? Governor Dewey has asked the New York State Legislature for an appropriation of $350,000,000 to be used for mental health. Suppose all of it were spent on new institutions: there would be a sudden leap in the reported number of psychotics. But this would tell us very little about the actual distribution of mental disease, except that many—an indeterminable percentage—of its victims go without professional care.

Goldhamer and Marshall assert that, "The various conditions inhibiting admissions to mental hospitals were at least no less in Massachusetts of 1855-59 than they are currently in the United States as a whole." It follows that any estimate of psychosis in the population at large is guesswork. Practically all mental hospitals are crowded, many have long waiting lists. In short a certain proportion of people are known to be psychotic and yet go

uncommitted. Full records of how many individuals apply for admission to mental hospitals are lacking, but if we could add those who do apply and are turned down for reasons of space to those who are accepted, the statistical picture would look quite different. Nor would we have exhausted the possibilities. For there are certainly psychotics who never apply or are never committed to mental hospitals.

It is relevant to consider the rural-urban differential. S. Kirson Wineberg indicates that, "The standardized rates for schizophrenia during 1933, based upon the 1930 population, show 1.92 times more schizophrenics committed from urban than from rural areas." How does one interpret such facts? Either the statistics are faulty and farmers are just as susceptible to schizophrenia as urban dwellers, or social conditions *do* affect sanity. If the former, then Goldhamer and Marshall must be taken with a grain of salt; if the latter then no genetic theory of psychosis can be seriously entertained. Landis and Page report that for the years 1915-20 rates of schizophrenia in New York State increased steadily with size of city. The rates varied from 11.7 per 100,000 inhabitants in cities between 20,000 and 50,000 to 21 in New York City. With manic-depression the differences are less marked, but still plainly discernible.

All that Goldhamer and Marshall have really shown is that public and private expenditure for mental disorder is proportionately the same at present as it was a hundred years ago—at least in Massachusetts. (They have already been chided for confusing that New England state with all of civilization.) If this is so, I find it appalling that we should not have invested more heavily in research and treatment programs. Leopold Bellak, in his comprehensive survey of schizophrenia, points out that it is a scourge more serious than cancer since it usually strikes in early adult life whereas the degenerative diseases commonly occur at an advanced age. About fifty per cent of the total resident population of mental hospitals are schizophrenic. Since approximately one-half of all hospital beds in the nation are occupied by mental patients, and schizophrenics constitute one-half of these, Dr. Bellak suggests that every fourth or fifth bed available is occupied by a patient suffering from dementia praecox.

Is all this irremediable? Short of Nazi-style eugenics, there are three possible answers: 1) Yes, because some people are just born that way; 2) No, because the whole phenomenon is biological and can be dealt with mechanically, through such means as shock treatment; 3) No, because the problem is biosocial and where machines have failed other methods are beginning to work. That the last answer should still be an unpopular one puzzles me a great deal.

Ours is a middling age. We have a middle class society, a middle-brow culture, and a middle-of-the-road government. A false aura of Aristotelian wisdom has been cast over the whole civilization. With all that, when a centrist position is really indicated those who embrace moderation in the abstract, choose this occasion to throw it overboard. Our constitutions differ drastically, but any of us may become psychotic. No one who takes

lysergic acid diethylanide at Boston Psychopathic Hospital fails to experience insanity. Nevertheless, we are differentially endowed, perhaps from birth, surely thereafter; one man's predispositions are not the same as another's. If X is unhinged he may become a paranoid while Y exhibits symptoms of cyclothymia. None of this takes place *in vacuo*. Something precipitates the disorder: war, bereavement, guilt, conflict—something. If precipitating factors can be minimized by a reconstitution of the society that breeds them, it is safe to say that personality disorganization will decline. If, however, you believe there is no essential difference between American society and, let us say Congolese Bantu society where Ellsworth Faris reports "the relative absence of insanity," then nothing needs to be reconstituted unless it be the body chemistry and the brain tissue of disturbed individuals.

The insane used to be doomed; nothing could be done for them aside from the provision of more or less brutal custodial care. By now we are supposed to have progressed far beyond any theory of diabolic possession. Nevertheless, it often seems as if nothing except terminology has actually changed. About twenty years ago shock treatment was discovered and quickly swept the psychiatric field where, more often than not it continues to be used promiscuously. A good many practitioners have finally felt some revulsion against this so-called therapy whose use causes quick remissions and quick readmissions. It is no longer widely regarded as a panacea. One uses shock to establish rapport, to pierce the patient's gibberish, to bring him within reach. And when he relapses, one shocks him again. What harm this may do no one knows, but therapists who have had success in the direct analysis of psychotics contend that those who have been subjected to excessive shock are by far the hardest to cure.

Despite this chastening experience, the psychiatric Old Guard are undismayed. Their presuppositions are perhaps more popular than ever. I recently took a guided tour through one of Massachusetts' more "progressive" mental hospitals and was struck with the fact that nearly every other patient had a bandaged head. Lobotomy, lobectomy, lately topectomy, and other forms of emotional decapitation which do not diminish intelligence (they merely take the spark out of life) have become increasingly common. Psychiatrists are reported in the press to be working on a magic pill that, when consumed in the proper quantity, will restore the demented to health and happiness. It is still the devil, which smells as medieval by any other name, that needs to be exorcised.

Laurence K. Frank has suggested, however, that society is the patient. So long as we persist in denying this, it will be impossible to adopt a curative *or* a therapeutic program of any fundamental value. Clearly, we need not tamper with our sick society if psychosis—and who knows how many other forms of pathology?— are, as Glazer so happily puts it, "independent of environmental circumstances." What may not be so obvious is that, within such a narrow framework, even intelligent therapy for indi-

vidual patients, limited as its possibilities may be, is also very nearly blocked.

If severe mental disorder is nothing but a biological phenomenon, machines, pills, and surgical instruments are the appropriate means for dealing with it. On the other hand, if psychosis is a personality problem ordinarily triggered by a crisis embedded in our tension-ridden society, then psychotherapy is surely indicated. Furthermore, practitioners like John Nathaniel Rosen, Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, and Harry Stack Sullivan have had success in treating schizophrenics without benefit of shock or tips from the pharmacopeia. Rosen goes to the heart of the matter in "Direct Analysis" when he observes:

> Early years of training in pathology prompted me to describe the deteriorated schizophrenic in . . . organic terms, although at no point along the line have I ever been persuaded that there exists in these patients an organic or even a constitutional factor that could begin to fulfill the criteria of Koch's postulates. In each case, in accordance with well-known authors, I also found environmental factors of such distressing intensity that, if they could be duplicated, I believe they would produce the same type of psychosis in many other individuals as that which was produced in the unfortunate victims.

The above would seem to be a firm link in the chain of progressive approximations of the truth; and if writers in liberal journals such as *Commentary* prefer to suppose that psychosis is "independent of environmental circumstances" that may well be because they are committed to the view that American society—call it capitalism, socialism, what have you—is nearly the best of possible worlds. But social currents have a way of changing, and scientific evidence has a way of accumulating. Given another twist of the *Zeitgeist*, the views I have quoted from Rosen may even gain general acceptance.

2. The Politics of the Lie Detector

Murray Hausknecht

In his recent quarrel with the U. S. Army over Schine & Cohn, Senator McCarthy suggested that everyone concerned be subjected to a lie detector test. This proposal, which for the time at least has dropped out of political sight, followed upon a similar suggestion by McCarthy during the debate over the confirmation of Charles Bohlen as Ambassador to Russia. Subsequent analysis of this debate by writers of both right and left paid little attention to this curious proposal; most of them treated it as just another amusing vagary of the McCarthy mind. Few mentioned the fact that he had made the same suggestion during the

Malmedy investigation or that Richard Nixon, then in the House of Representatives, had proposed the use of the lie detector during the Hiss affair.

The problem here is not whether the lie detector works; for the sake of argument we may assume that it can do everything it is supposed to do. The problem is, Why the lie detector? Or to put it in somewhat academic terms: What does the perceived appropriateness of the use of the machine tell us about certain orientations to the problems of men and society?

The Bohlen affair, despite its rather special setting, typifies a common problem: the evaluation of the fitness of a person for a given post. Yet while men spend a good part of their time consciously or unconsciously evaluating other men, such judgments present constant difficulties. On what grounds should an individual be evaluated? How can one be sure that the criteria one employs are valid?

Some cases pose a minimum of difficulties. Choosing a stenographer is no great problem since the criteria are relatively simple; measurement is not complex; and most important of all, the person making the choice does not have to have any expert knowledge of shorthand and typing.

Contrast this with the problem of choosing a doctor. Medicine is a highly specialized field, and to discriminate intelligently among doctors would presuppose some knowledge of the field. Granted such knowledge, there is still a vast area of disagreement about what makes one doctor more competent than another. And there is the further difficulty of obtaining reliable information about the various candidates: how many of Dr. Sawbones operations were successful last year? Faced with such problems the layman may prefer to remain ill.

An important difference between these two cases is the degree of uncertainty and risk inherent in each situation. The man choosing a doctor is more uncertain about the correctness of his choice than the man choosing a stenographer. If there is uncertainty in evaluating technical competence, consider the degree of uncertainty bound to be present in trying to evaluate a person's "moral character" or "loyalty." Exactly what these terms mean, much less how to measure the qualities they are presumed to signify—does anyone know?

There are at least two polar ways of adapting to this situation. If our evaluations are uncertain, then, no matter what our tentative conclusion about an individual, we must treat him with suspicion; he becomes a possible enemy. Or, since our judgments are uncertain, we must not be dogmatic; there is a necessity for tolerating others.

Precisely this emphasis on the lack of dogmatism and the necessity for tolerance in the face of uncertainty is a fundamental premise of a democratic society. In such a society people are inclined to give others the "benefit of the doubt." The person who lives by democratic values chooses to live with uncertainty and risk—it would be foolish to deny this; he prefers such uncertainty and risk to a certainty of which the price is to regard his neighbor as a beast in the jungle.

By contrast, it is the constant search for certainty and the accompanying suspicion of larger and larger segments of the world that marks the totalitarian mind. The search for certainty soon becomes both cause and consequence of suspicion and distrust. Once the infallible yardstick has been found—and the totalitarian mind always claims to have found it—there is no necessity for even considering the individual as a *person* until the yardstick has been applied.

The lie detector is one such yardstick. Two questions were raised about Bohlen: Was he competent? Was he "loyal?" Secretary of State Dulles testified to both his competence and "loyalty." The choice of Bohlen rested on Dulles' own assessment of Bohlen, and this in turn was determined, presumably, by Dulles' decision to trust the judgment of others. When McCarthy made his suggestion for the use of the lie detector, it was this chain of trust and confidence that he was attacking—a chain of trust and confidence, by the way, that would have to exist in any democratic society.

If, however, one cannot expect people to establish social relations on some basis of mutual trust, then the only choice is to enforce unity through brute coercion. When we demand certainty, and we refuse to extend trust based on acceptance—or at least recognition—of uncertainty, then we have turned the world into a Hobbesian jungle in which only brute force can preserve us in the face of the hazards of life. But not only does the quest for certainty transform others into beasts who are seen as a threat to one's self-preservation; it also turns them into beasts in the sense that it actually strips them of their distinctly human qualities.

The Nazi yardstick for the evaluation of individuals was "race"; the Russians use "class origin." To employ these standards means that one overlooks or discards those qualities which make an individual the unique person he is. That is, such standards are deliberately *not* concerned with those aspects of his personality subject to his control, but focus entirely upon the individual as an *impersonal object*.

The lie detector functions as a yardstick of the same order, for it too converts the individual into an impersonal object. The theory behind the machine is based on the fact that psychological and physiological processes are interdependent; when a person lies the normal organic reaction patterns are upset. It is these physiological changes that the machine detects and measures. The device focuses attention on those aspects of the personality which are beyond the control of the individual. The individual is perceived as a biological organism; and all other qualities which distinguish him as a human being are ignored.

The impersonality of the process is brought out more clearly if we note its resemblance to torture. Torture is the infliction of bodily pain in order to induce an individual to speak or act contrary to his desires. The torturer is a subversive agent who sets one part of the person warring against the other. He is successful when he has forced the body to "betray" the ego, and thereby destroy the integrity of the individual. Torture is

permitted only in those societies which define individuals as objects, and where there is no value placed upon the privacy and integrity of the person.

Lack of concern with privacy and integrity of the personality makes such institutions as "Bolshevik self-criticism" possible. "Self-criticism" in this case makes the individual periodically lay himself open to inspection by the group; it is a process which makes the person's ego public property. As a result there is a devaluation of the self which of course makes the individual easier to control by those who wield power.

This public self-denigration, which is an invariable element of Stalinist "self-criticism," is also an inherent consequence of the "methods" of our native loyalty investigators. Many witnesses who appear before Congressional committees to testify about previous "links" with the Stalinists have felt constrained to label themselves "dupes" as a means of showing their present sincerity. To be a dupe is to be a gull, one who is easily deceived; and many were undoubtedly gullible. But an investigation process which constrains persons publicly to damage their self-esteem is a process which shows itself insensitive to the need for respect of the privacy and integrity of the person upon which a democratic social order rests.

Our objection to the "methods" of the McCarthys is not that they violate the legal norms of the society, but that their violation of these norms implies a definition of the person which is antithetical to the requirements of a social order in which individuals exist as persons. The unchecked use of the "methods" of a McCarthy and their acceptance by the society means the growth of a view of man which helps prepare the atmosphere for totalitarianism. And as we become aware of the "deeper" significance of such behavior our awareness may help guard us against the danger of adopting the orientation of the adversary; a trap which many liberals, despite their indignation, have not succeeded in avoiding.

3. Popular Music and the New Man of Skill

Harvey Swados

Rockland County, the most rural area within close reach of New York City, has attracted a large number of creative and technical workers in the arts who want to live in the unsuburbanized country while enjoying the advantages of being close to the city. As is the case with the metropolitan middle class, the actors, musicians, writers and painters who reside here often get to know one another through their children and their children's schools.

One of these is the Rockland Foundation, which conducts classes in handicrafts, music and dance for children and adults and periodically sponsors one-man shows of local artists. This year the Foundation has been

presenting a series of symposiums on the arts, drawing its audience from the broad new middle class of technician-commuters and their culturally ambitious wives.

Not long ago the effects of popular music on musical standards were debated by Donald Waxman, an uncompromising young composer, and Mitchell Miller, the distinguished oboe virtuso. Miller's remarks and the attitude toward popular culture they reveal deserve a wider audience than the roomful of neighbors he addressed. Mr. Miller has not been content to be a "working classical musician," his own modest description of a career that has won him international recognition. He is also "A & R Man" (Artists & Repertoire) for Columbia Records, which means that as director of that company's popular music recording division he has been responsible for a considerable amount of the music we hear over the radio and on juke boxes.

To Mr. Waxman's complaints that everything is now geared to the juke box, that artificiality has replaced spontaneity, and that current musical sentimentality is a hybrid of Salvation Army brass and youngsters screaming for more, Mr. Miller had a variety of both simple and sophisticated retorts.

There was, for one thing, the incontrovertible assurance that the record companies are giving the public what it wants. That this may evoke memories of similar pronouncements by publishers of sado-masochist "mystery" and comic books should not consequently render it nugatory. For, more than that: thanks to LP, the record companies are now giving the public *everything* it wants, from wailing balladeers to Beethoven's chamber music. The manufacturers, men of taste though they are, simply grapple with reality when they proceed from the incontestible truth that the public prefers Johnny Ray to the Budapest Quartet. They are consoled in this unhappy situation by a keen awareness that the sales of pop recordings are a thinly disguised blessing insofar as they make it possible to produce recordings of classical or modern music which will be unprofitable . . . or comparatively so.

Music, Mr. Miller observed, is the most transitory of all the arts; it whizzes past the ear and is gone. Those who play classical records, as well as those who drop their nickles into juke boxes, often do not even *listen* to it, but merely allow it to fill the air while they drink, dance, eat, talk. Obviously, then, the general response to music is basically emotional. The listener who does not know counterpoint can only respond emotionally to Beethoven's Great Fugue, regardless of how much more highly he may value his response over that of the hillbilly music enthusiast. Even the musically educated listener, technically trained to follow Beethoven's fantastically inventive convolutions of counterpoint, is in the end having an emotional experience too, for what else is an intellectual appreciation that is so deeply felt as to be moving in itself?

Having thus aroused the guilt feelings of the entire audience (all of whom must surely at one time or another have listened with only half an

ear to good music, or regretted the lack of training which effectively precludes the higher appreciation), Mr. Miller was able to press forward unchallenged to another level of discourse. Who is to say whether one type of emotional response is superior to another? In a free society, no one has the right to deprive his fellows of a variety of emotional experience which he may disapprove of or find distasteful. Popular music serves the masses who work for a living; the novelty hit enables the workingman to "have a ball" after a hard day's work; the lyrics of "I Believe" put into singable words the philosophical banalities which the proletarian feels but cannot express (and is therefore, we are assured, the biggest hit in the world, even played in churches); the recording of "Ebb Tide," complete with sea gulls and flowing water, is released during the hot weather, and makes stifling humanity feel cool; Miss Doris Day's singing of "Secret Love" appeals not only to adolescent lovers but to reminiscent ones as well.

One cannot help but suspect that when such a leveling, "democratic" defense of meretricious music is made by a renowned virtuoso, it must conceal a boundless contempt for the mass audience. The semi-affectionate contempt of the pitchman for the rube, of the procurer for his customers is here extended to encompass not only the lowbrow, but the middle and highbrow as well—all, in short, who consume music but are not so fortunate as to make it . . . or to promote it.

One of the promoters happened to be in the audience, a prominent disc-jockey who took irate exception to Mr. Waxman's pointing out that in current popular music the melodic line is thin and the emphasis is on audio-technology. Himself a well-educated musician, he had left WQXR (America's outstanding middlebrow radio station) because, as he put it, he could no longer bear to listen to the endless repetition of the same forty albums of classical music. (There was no mention of money. Nor had there been by Mr. Miller.) When this disc-jockey heard Mr. Waxman admit that he did not listen to the radio, although he too had once been associated with it professionally, and then utter the heresy that he did not believe unreservedly in recordings, he was satisfied that Mr. Waxman had thereby disqualified himself as a commentator on the musical scene. The implication was that departure from the intolerable middlebrow world was morally sanctioned if it took one to the democratic (and profitable) precincts of the lowbrow, but had to be condemned as a manifestation of snobbism if it led to the segregated area of the highbrow.

The arguments of the disc-jockey, undoubtedly a man of sensibility and taste, paralleled those of Mr. Miller. Both defended popular music against those who had no *right* to attack: because they expressed reserve as to the inherent value of phonograph records, because they could not listen to popular music without becoming ill and hence were not *au courant*, or simply because as laymen they were intimidated by the superior technical qualifications of the defenders. And after all, you can't buck success

in the U.S.A., whether in business or in high art—and Mitch Miller has it both ways.

But the appearance of the disc-jockey serves as a sharp reminder that Mr. Miller is not merely a successful middleman, peddling a commodity already in demand. He has a key role in a vast apparatus devoted to the manufacturing of public taste and to the conditioning of that taste through constant reiteration (the disc-jockey and the juke box), and he cannot escape responsibility for his share in the development of a mass demand for mediocrity and worse.

Yet the salesmen of popular culture are anxious for those whose respect they crave to believe what they would apparently like to believe about themselves: that they are merely filling a need. Surely, however, the commercial need for carefully calculated campaigns of saturation must compel them to devote an increasingly large part of their business lives to the stimulation of a desire for junk. They must arouse this desire not only in the impressionable young, but also in millions of ordinary citizens who, while they may be receptive, have not been observed taking to the streets to demand greater quantities of that junk. They would be less than human if they did not wish to subordinate this aspect of their activities in behalf of the claim that their junk finds a market.

But this is an old complaint. It has been brought against the popular culture merchants with depressing regularity, and there appear to be no grounds at present for hoping that it may be safely abated as the cultural level rises. Yet the terms of the complaint may have to be revised as the ranks of the popular culture merchants are infiltrated by the new men of skill, who are more adept at the art of self-justification without the aid of a corps of public relations experts hired to mediate their case to an increasingly knowledgeable public. Mitch Miller can be seen as the musical counterpart of Dore Schary; as Schary supplanted Louis B. Mayer, so Miller has supplanted an earlier generation of cigar-chewing Tin Pan Alley vulgarians—and additional examples could be adduced from other fields.

With the gradual shift of control of the mass media to the hands of educated technicians there is a concomitant shift in the defensive rationale of the culture merchants, and in their resentful mistrust of the egotism and superciliousness of those who insist on the primary importance of the individual, self-centered creator in the arts. It is interesting to observe that the most unrestrained assaults on DISSENT, and on its editors, come not from the veteran spokesmen of entrenched reaction (who would appear to be otherwise occupied), but rather from young intellectuals who apparently feel *their own* positions as arbiters of taste and policy to be threatened by the mere raising of dissident voices. Just so, in the field of popular culture the most heartfelt attacks on the "irresponsibles" and the "esthetes" as subverters of the democratic diffusion of culture come not from those who have traditionally sought the honor of sniping at highbrows, but from the new men of skill, who regard themselves—not without a certain justification—as both liberal minded and cultivated.

It was hardly to be expected that these new men of skill would seek to justify their conduct in the terms of their predecessors, who could speak bluntly about being in business to make money. What was not foreseen, however, was the contempt for the consumer that would lurk behind every platitudinous protestation of faithful service to the vast spectrum of mass taste. Can it be that this contempt in turn really serves to screen from the very ones who harbor it something that would be even more dangerous to reveal—self-contempt?

NOTES FROM A SUPERFLUOUS MAN

There are times and places where it is a capital crime to raise an eye-brow.

Only in Rome can you make, with impunity, disparaging remarks about Punic faith.

Some people never think: they just worry.

My freedom should be more important to you than your own.

My wife has slowly taught me to expect worse than anything I have yet experienced, imagined or dreamed. I now wake up from my worst nightmares in a panic: they may but mildly foreshadow what I am yet destined to experience in reality.

You can kill half a million human beings by pressing the same kind of button that once delighted my grandmother when it was first explained to her that she could summon the hotel-maid by merely ringing an electric bell. But my grandmother still entertained certain delicacies of sentiment: it took her quite a while to overcome her feelings of pity for the poor woman whose comings and goings were thus regulated by a mere gadget.

A democratic age invents democratic weapons: no respecter of persons, the atom-bomb kills rich and poor, men and women, young and old, soldiers and civilians, the innocent and the guilty, all with a truly remarkable impartiality. A society that tends towards classlessness could no longer tolerate the niceties that once dictated the beheading of a gentleman but the hanging of a commoner.

Freedom is far too sacred a matter to discuss in newspapers.

History seems to be an endless series of solemn warnings, gossipy anecdotes, bitter Jewish jokes or sententious precedents. It can be boring or entertaining, but it can scarcely help us to guess what is going to happen now.

We now have more opportunities to read about democracy than to experience it.

The Welfare State: paternalism without any fatherly love.

EDOUARD RODITI

CAN SUBSIDIES SAVE THE FARMER?

H. Brand

For the past eighty years the basic economic cause of agrarian movements in the U. S., as well as of government efforts to subsidize agriculture, has been the difference between prices received and prices paid by the farmer. None of the great issues which have in the past contributed to revolutions in Europe and which are still posed today in many parts of Asia has ever seriously affected American agriculture. The very term "farmer" implies both freely transferable ownership of land unencumbered by traditional landlord-tenant obligations, and involvement in the impersonal market economy, indebtedness to an impersonal banking system.

The problem of American agriculture has been and remains a problem of uneven social development *within* the framework of capitalism. Agriculture is still largely based on a multitude of family-owned and operated units, atomized, with high fixed costs, unable to curtail production yet prey to widely fluctuating prices. Industry, on the other hand, has long since been centralized; it can shift the burden of low prices to society as a whole by such moves as dismissing its workers. Moreover, given its nearly inexhaustible technological versatility, modern industry has attained a high degree of control over changing economic conditions, be they price fluctuations, raw material supplies, labor mobility or marketing. The family farm cannot possibly match this; its capital and labor resources are highly restricted and stationary; its operations are necessarily of small scope and, but for government intervention, it would have to rely on a precarious market to realize an uncertain return.

Government subsidization of the farmer has been an attempt to rescue the small property owner from the irresistible pressures of modern technology with its socializing tendencies. At least in the U. S., this attempt has not been successful. It has not preserved a rural community of self-reliant farmers —a Jeffersonian ideal still upheld by many good, but nevertheless naive persons. Rather, it may be said to have accelerated the process of dissolution. It has spurred the industrialized agricultural plant, operated by scientifically trained personnel for whom farming is either a job or a commercial enterprise, but no longer a way of life.

The following will (1) briefly survey this process of industrialization as well as (2) income distribution in U. S. agriculture. An attempt will be made

(3) to analyze some of the policies of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (referred to as USDA); and finally (4), the price support methods proposed by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), and enacted in 1948, though not yet fully enforced, will be contrasted with the "Brannan Plan," supported by the National Farmers Union (NFU).

I

Industrialization of agriculture, both mechanical and chemical, has so vastly increased productivity that, in the absence of government-guaranteed prices, production restrictions and similar devices, only large-scale operations, involving as they do low per-unit costs and low per-unit profits, are becoming economically feasible.[1]

The number of persons who could be sustained by the work of one farm worker (i.e., hired or owner-operator) rose between 1820 and 1900 from 4.52 to 8.05; and by 1945 to 14.54. By 1945 the farm worker could of course devote far more of his time to actual agricultural work and needed less for such chores as care of draft animals and building maintenance; however, the consumer's diet was far more varied and complex than it had been 50 or 100 years before. This vast increase in output was related to both a relative decline in farm labor manpower and to increasing mechanization.

Taking 1870 as 100, total farm output by 1946 had risen to 453; output per worker to 324; volume of farm power and mechanical equipment to 542 and availability of such equipment per worker to 387. But the index of farm employment had risen to only 140. The dynamic force of mechanization is further illuminated by the rise in productivity between the period 1935-39 (= 100) and 1948-52: man hours for all farm work decreased to 86 but total farm output increased by 40 and volume of farm power and machinery increased by 66 (for 1953 a total rise of 88 index points was indicated).

It is not without interest to show in what way labor savings were achieved in 1944 in comparison with the period 1917-21. It is seen then that mechanization accounts for only 48 per cent of all savings, the other 52 per cent consisting of: increased yields per acre (19 per cent), increased size of enterprise and increased production per animal (13 per cent), spreading of overhead costs over a larger volume of production (7 per cent), changes in method, work simplification, etc. (27 per cent). The basis for this rationalization of agricultural production clearly is mechanization. Private and government research and experimentation and resulting yield increases *presume* a large scale production potential.

Looking briefly at the kinds of mechanization that have taken place, we find that on January 1, 1952 there were in use over 4 million tractors,

nearly 900,000 grain combines, over 2.4 million trucks, etc. The age distribution of this equipment was quite favorable: for the U. S. as a whole, an average of 52 per cent of three major types of tractors was then in use 5 years or less; another 20 per cent 6 to 10 years. And the age distribution of other equipment is not dissimilar.

How much labor does this machinery save? If a 14-in. moldboard plow is used for ten hours, drawn by two horses, with a man walking behind, two acres can be plowed; if drawn by five horses four acres can be plowed in that time. A 15-hp. tractor, drawing the same type of plow and also operating for ten hours, will plow eight acres. A ten-foot disk plow, however, drawn by a 20-hp. tractor for ten hours will open up twenty-eight acres of soil. A two-row cultivator, drawn by three horses for ten hours will cultivate twelve acres of corn or cotton; but a 15-hp. tractor drawing a four-row cultivator can cultivate thirty-five acres during that time. Similar striking savings in labor are achieved by combines, milking machines and cotton pickers.[2]

Machines can not only be more effectively and more intensively exploited than horses (whom they have largely replaced, accounting for the release of 55 million acres for crops other than horse feeds), they permit a speed of operations inconceivable with animals. This can mean a prosperous crop as against no crop or a very poor one, in case, for example, there has been a wet spring. Plowing and seeding can then be crowded into a few days towards the end of the season.

The increases in agricultural productivity and production due to mechanization are far from ended; the increases due to the application of chemicals are just beginning. The great abundance of land in the U. S. in the nineteenth century made extensive agriculture possible; mechanization made it feasible. The use of artificial fertilizer solved the problem of chemical exhaustion of the soil and thus brought about a combination of extensive and intensive cultivation. The new chemical crop controls make possible a further intensification of land use not by adding to soil fertility but by making soil fertility almost entirely available to the commercial crop; i.e., by destroying insects, weeds, and even by "stream-lining" the crop plant itself through defoliation. Interestingly, the volume of increase in crops since the period 1935-39 is identical with the increase of crop production per acre since that time, i.e., 33 per cent; the volume increase is not to any significant degree due to use of additional land.

The control efficiency of the new chemicals today is nearly 100 per cent; the old insecticides rarely exceeded 60 per cent. Because of the former, yields of wheat in Oklahoma, for example, have increased 400 per cent, hybrid corn production 30 per cent; and with the help of the cotton-picker, man hours needed to produce a bale of cotton have declined from 155 in

1940 to slightly more than 10 today. Reclamation as well as the use of low-yield and therefore cheap land has become commercially feasible due to new herbicides. The chemical destruction of sage brush in Colorado would increase the value of beef there from $2 per acre to $7. Also available are fungicides which protect the seed of wheat and sorghums. The cost of these chemicals amounts to 1 per cent of the farmer's gross income at present and will not exceed 5 per cent when intensively used.[3]

II

Have farmers gained by mechanization? Can it be said that the returns on their production efforts have been brought into some degree of balance with those of industrial labor? Compared to their previous status farmers certainly have gained. Despite a decline in agricultural prices from 100 (1910-14) to 84 (1935-39), the farmers' real labor returns (i.e., their real income) rose by 21 per cent. During this same period output per farm worker rose to 139 (1910-14 = 100), farm employment declined from 12.1 million to 10.9 million and crop yields per harvested acre increased by 5 per cent. But this does not answer the question put at the beginning of this paragraph. And it is a question which is not merely "interesting" but which derives its significance from the claim of farmers' representatives in and out of Congress that agricultural prices must be government-supported if they are to have parity with the prices the farmer pays.[4] For the violent fluctuations to which prices of agricultural commodities are subject, in the face of the relative fixity of the farmer's land, labor and capital resources, would otherwise bring eventual ruin to the countryside. But, as we will see, despite the existence of government-guaranteed parity prices for some twenty years, there has been an unabated exodus from agriculture into other occupations. Clearly, those leaving agriculture were concerned not with prices but with income. Yet parity income, as contrasted with parity prices, has not been of much concern to the statistical agencies of the USDA.

To the extent to which an answer *is* given to our question, it is further obscured by the practice of averaging *all* U. S. commercial farms, the highly mechanized ones as well as those where hand and animal labor still predominate. But, as will be shown later, the mechanized and rationalized farms produce by far the greater value and volume of farm products even though they are in a numerical minority. By averaging all U. S. farms not only are distinctions between income strata obliterated but labor returns data are weighted downward to a far greater degree than warranted. A more realistic approach to comparative incomes in city and country would quite likely contribute to a sharp reappraisal of present policies of subsidization. It is, furthermore, the consensus among some agricultural

economists that, since 1945 at least, no income disparity between farmers as a whole and other economic groups exists, that "average equality for agriculture has been achieved in part at the expense of greater relative inequality within agriculture." [5]

What is meant by this "inequality" and what promotes it?

Since 1933 farm population has declined from 30 million to about 24 million persons (20 per cent); farm units have declined by one million; at the same time, farms of 1,000 acres or over have increased by 80 per cent and those of 500 to 1,000 acres by about 40 per cent. The economically weak and inefficient farmers have thus been making way for the stronger and efficient farmers. Since 1840 the ratio of farm labor to the total labor force has declined by roughly 5 per cent every ten years; today it is about 12 per cent. Further declines in farm labor are a virtual certainty, given the constant advances in agricultural productivity and consequent necessity for increasing capital investment. Now, when it is considered that only about 27 per cent of farm labor is hired, it becomes clear that it is the family unit which is gradually being wiped out.

In 1949 there were approximately 5.3 million farms in the U. S., of which 3.7 million were commercial, i.e., derived all of their income from the sale of crops. The gross income of the latter farms amounted in 1949 to 21.7 billion, of which $5.7 billion, or 26 per cent went to farms whose incomes exceeded $25,000 annually. There exist about 103,000 farms in this group, or 1.9 per cent of all farms. The next group, with a yearly income of above $10,000, but below $25,000, comprises about 380,000, or 7.1 per cent, of all U. S. farms; their income in 1949 was $5.5 billion, or 24.8 per cent of total gross farm income. Thus, in 1949, over one-half of gross farm income went to 9 per cent of all U. S. farms; the other 91 per cent grossed less than half of this income.

That there is a tendency towards concentration in land is also an established fact. Unfortunately no data exists to the writer's knowledge which relates this concentration in land to the value of crops produced on it. Individuals hold 85 per cent of all cultivated, grass and wooded land; corporations 6 per cent and the rest is owned by government. More than half of the farm lands held by individuals is in lots of 500 acres or more; 3 per cent of individuals hold 41 per cent of all farm lands.

III

The Department of Agriculture's policies, whatever their avowed intention—the intention originating with Congress, whose representatives are responsible to many small farmers—have greatly promoted this inequality of farm income, hence also the concentration of land in progressively

fewer hands. The cost-per-unit of the big operator with his large physical plant is obviously smaller than that of the less efficient farmer, but support prices for their produce are the same for both. Income, the difference between price and cost, is therefore considerably smaller per unit for the latter than for the former. Thus the big farmer receives from the government what is analogous to a "differential ground rent." Furthermore, in the absence of risks which unguaranteed prices would constitute, he can improve his plant and expand his operations; the small farmer, at best, stagnates.

Nor have government credit policies been helpful to the small farmer, except inconsequentially. The abolition of the Federal Security Administration (FSA) in 1946 marked the end of an endeavor to counteract the effects of agricultural industrialization upon the small farm on a basis which would integrate both. Whatever one may think of the methods used, or even the soundness of the concept itself, there was a broad social purpose behind this effort, a large view of a real problem in American society. The Farmers Home Administration, which superseded the FSA, is essentially nothing more than a bank. It has been strictly concerned with individual small farmers, extending small loans to them for rehabilitation, farm purchases, etc. The act under which it was established expressly forbids it to grant loans for carrying on any sort of collective or cooperative type of farming operation. Thereby it is effectively prevented from undertaking a serious program of counteracting the decline of family farming. It is true that since about 1947 the Federal Land Banks have somewhat liberalized their loan policies. However, the stringency of their collateral requirements, combined with the fact that the National Farm Loan Associations—through which any loan must be made and which are held partly accountable for its repayment—are dominated by the wealthier farmers and county bankers, militates against the small farmer benefiting from them.

The idea of price supports for agricultural commodities by means of government storage programs or export subsidies was not original with the New Deal. World War I stimulated the expansion of agriculture everywhere, but by 1923 the international market had reasserted its dominance and falling prices threatened entire national systems of agriculture with ruination. In the U. S., the various McNary-Haugen bill, introduced into Congress but never enacted into law, presaged, in essence though not in scope, the New Deal's Agricultural Adjustment Acts of the 1930s. The basic emphasis of the AAA, like that of all the other major programs of the New Deal, was not on the structural causes of the depression but on price. But if the raising of prices was to be made effective with some degree of permanency and without prolonged direct interference by the government in the autonomous price mechanism, the basic policy had to be one of scarcity. Now, history had shown that, as prices fell, the farmer tended

to produce more, not less. For the average farmer is concerned not with price but with income; so that by enlarging his volume of production, he attempted to overcome the effect of low prices. The scarcity policy of the USDA was bound to affect the income of the small farmer far more decisively than that of the big farmer. The latter's production volume is always large enough, the relatively high degree of flexibility of his enterprise in regard to extent of acreage, his technical means, the availability of seasonal labor, the facility with which he can obtain credit, the easy access he has to marketing institutions (not in physical terms but in terms of social and economic status)—all this permits him "to take his chances with price." The approach of USDA has facilitated this discrepancy, for its role has been "neutral," its restrictive measures being applied without differentiating among income strata. For example, acreage restrictions were not more severe in the case of the big farmer than in that of the small; rather, they were in all cases based on past harvested acreage.

Even so, it is contended by some authorities that restrictive measures have not done anything towards raising prices.[6] Acreage restrictions simply encouraged more intensified cultivation and hybrid breeding, producing higher per acre yields. Marketing quotas, based on past marketings, encouraged improvement of quality, thus raising the price of the commodity in question but thereby also the pressure against restricting its production. World War II, bringing a period of world-wide rising prices, merely postponed facing the critical nature of the problem of surpluses and the mounting costs of government agricultural policies;[7] but with these surface problems the whole question of the social structure of American agriculture was to be raised.

IV

In organizational terms this question is posed, on the one hand, by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF), chief spokesman of the commercial farming interests, and, on the other, by the National Farmers Union (NFU), exponent of the small farmer. They may not be fully representative in all they say or do of either stratum of the farming population, but the statements of Mr. Kline, president of the AFBF, and those of Mr. Patton, president of the NFU, quite clearly indicate what is at stake. In legislative terms the issues are expressed, though not without a degree of obscurity resulting from half-hearted and expedient compromise, by the Agricultural Act of 1948, and by the "Brannan Plan." The struggle over agricultural legislation this spring is simply over the degree to which the long-range provisions of the 1948 act should become fully effective. The outstanding provision of this act is the supplanting of "rigid" by "flexible"

price supports. Hitherto the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) had extended loans to farmers, or had made purchases from processors, of all commodities which came under the provisions of the AAA (as amended), at 90 per cent of their parity price. (If a farmer can sell his produce on the market above the parity price he does so, or, if he has stored it in a CCC warehouse as collateral against a loan, he takes it out again, repays the loan which was in the amount of 90 per cent of the parity price, and pockets the difference; if he cannot sell it on the market, he leaves it in the warehouse, omits repaying the loan and it becomes government property.) Henceforth the price supports were no longer to be "rigid," i.e., independent of existing stocks; they were to range from 60 per cent to 90 per cent depending on whether stocks were plentiful or low.

The key provisions of the "Brannan Plan" were: (1) direct payments to farmers at a given level of support prices, with market prices remaining free to find their own level; (2) only those farmers were eligible to receive the payments whose total production did not exceed a certain limit (1,800 production units, the unit being variously defined, depending on the commodity; I believe the gross income of a farm producing 1,800 units would be around $10,000 a year, far higher than the average income of the bulk of U. S. farms, but Brannan was deliberately generous in this); (3) a new parity formula was introduced which made a first attempt at substituting income for price as the basis for parity.

The NFU not only supported the Brannan Plan but went further by demanding government-supported prices at 100 per cent of parity. The AFBF levied numerous objections to the Brannan Plan, some of which are worth dealing with here for the light they shed on the problem. Its objections include: that the plan means government-controlled farm income, prices and production; that a "ceiling on opportunity in agriculture" would be imposed by it; and that the taxpayers would foot the bill for the consumers (i.e., many of whom pay no or little taxes).

There is a good deal to be said for the arguments of the AFBF in favor of flexible price supports and their objections to Mr. Brannan's proposals cannot be lightly dismissed. True, flexible supports favor the big farmer whose efficiency is great, whose costs are therefore low, who produces sufficient volume to compete in a market which, though prices cannot fall below a minimum, is not free from risk (risks which for him spell loss rather than ruin). By this same logic, flexible price supports, if carried through consistently, must eliminate the smaller and inefficient farmer with his necessarily small operating margin. Flexible supports also mean a relatively minor degree of government intervention in agriculture; they have, so to speak, a "built-in" mechanism which minimizes administrative controls and which permits agricultural production to be guided by price rather than

by the "incentive" of high government supports. Nor is the AFBF contention that a "ceiling on opportunity in agriculture" would be imposed by the income payment eligibility provisions of the Brannan Plan without substance. Quite logically, this plan provides that production beyond a stipulated number of units will not be price-supported. If prices are to bear any relation to cost, this means that in formulating them the relatively high cost of the small farmer's operation must be taken into account.[8] Stated bluntly: the small farmer's inefficiency is rewarded, the big farmer's efficiency is penalized. Furthermore, income payments and enforcement of eligibility rules would necessitate a very large measure of administrative control.

V

It is widely recognized that the movement of labor resources from agricultural to non-agricultural occupations, together with the progressive accumulation and concentration of capital on the land, is a tendency which adversely affects the small farmer first. This does not mean, however, that the efficiency of a farm is always or necessarily tied to its scale of operations. A considerable proportion of large-scale agriculture in the U. S. operates profitably only because its *actual* costs are thrown upon society as a whole; and this not merely because of sustained government subsidies, but also because of the widespread use of a vast pool of foreign and native "migratory" labor. The existence of this pool—abetted as it is by the all but open collusion between private interests and public authorities—not only tends to debase agricultural labor conditions, health and education standards as well as wages generally but, given its "cheapness" and ready availability, it acts as a brake upon technological advance.

Here it is at least conceivable that the replacement of the migratory labor pool by projects of efficiently operated family farms seasonally combining their labor and technical resources, would be a legitimate objective of government policy. But then one of the chief reasons for the successful attack upon the FSA was its ever-so-timid attempt at cooperative family farming; for this not only implied a long-range threat to the established patterns of social relations on the land, but also raised the immediate and practical issue of a cheap labor supply.

In a sense, the Brannan Plan was the very opposite of the FSA. The latter attempted to overcome the decline of the family farm by going to the social roots of the problem—i.e., by introducing structural changes which might eventually enable the small farmer, basing himself on cooperative methods of agricultural production, to compete with the commercial farms. The Brannan Plan—notwithstanding the frequent praise it has won from

liberals—was an attempt to stem the process of technological change by essentially reactionary measures which would have made a large sector of the population parasitically dependent upon government largesse.

In thus posing the differences between FSA and the Brannan Plan, what was common to both must not be disregarded. Both were government-sponsored; both were serious attempts to deal with critical situations; but neither originated with the farmers themselves. Both might be viewed as long-run means to forestall a possible radicalization of the small farmer in times of actual or threatening depression, when there can be little or no movement from the land into non-agricultural employment. And both were conditioned by the political atrophy of American agrarianism.

This political atrophy was the inevitable consequence of large-scale government intervention in agriculture; for such intervention always results in a loss of socio-economic focus. What had been *political* issues to the Populists, the Non-Partisan Leaguers, the Farmer-Labor people, became battles between rival bureaucracies in the Thirties and Forties.

Thus, the socio-economic processes here described have gradually undercut the possibility of independent agrarian politics. The various proposals of the NFU, most authentic representative of the small farmer, have been focussed—unavoidably, perhaps, in this period—upon shifts and modifications in present government policies. At no time in the past fifteen years has the NFU attempted a reappraisal of the social position of the small farmer and of the possible consequences flowing therefrom. Hence the sharp limitations to its influence. By contrast, the AFBF has succeeded not only in its original aim, which was to *curb* agrarian radicalism; it can today take for granted the political and ideological passivity of the American farmer, who has come to expect as a matter of course that the government will take the initiative in all questions of agricultural policy. Its chief task therefore has been and is to bring to bear the disproportionate electoral weight of the farmer upon national and state legislatures, and to insure its own dominance over both formulation and implementation of policy. Its success in this has been such that one cannot speak of it as a mere "pressure group"; it is a quasi-public organization, whose nuclei, the AFBF county secretaries, are in personal union with government officers, the county agents of the USDA Extension Service.

VI

What can be concluded, then, from this shift in the economics, the social structure and the political makeup of American agricultural life?

The prevailing trend is weakening and will eventually destroy the small farmer who has not been able to devise his own means of political and

economic struggle. Government policy, no matter what its momentary emphasis, has over the past few decades promoted this process of displacing the small farmer, despite the possibly sincere belief of Washington administrators that they were helping him.

So long as massive government subsidies to agriculture continue, so long as the surplus small farmer can be absorbed in urban occupations, no change in the political complexion of rural areas is to be expected. These will continue to enhance the power of conservatism in the U. S. If, however, because of a depression or a sharp recession, the small farmer were to find opportunities outside of agriculture closed to him, some sort of agrarian radicalism might once again arise. But its significance would be vastly overshadowed by developments in the unions, the Democratic Party, etc.

American agrarianism, undoubtedly one of the mainsprings of American democracy and one of the major sources of radicalism in the past, has exhausted its social and political possibilities. It is unlikely that it will ever play as important a role in the national life as it once did. The focus of political and social power has shifted to the big cities.

REFERENCE NOTES

1 "The ownership of machinery creates certain fixed costs which eat into profit when volume is reduced. At the same time, mechanization makes it possible for a farmer to obtain a satisfactory income through volume, with a smaller profit per unit." Allan Kline, president of AFBF, at the Hearing on the General Farm Program, part 3, serial R, p. 438. (April 1949).

2 Cotton pickers appear not as yet to have found wide-spread acceptance by planters; the U.S. census of 1950 does not list them. This is due to the field associated with their use, which makes human labor preferable. But there seems little question that the trend is toward complete mechanization in the Cotton Belt; overcoming the present difficulties is a mere matter of time. (See *The Agricultural Situation*, Sept. 1953; a publication of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, USDA.)

3 The materials used in section I of this article are based largely (though brought up to date where possible) on the excellent study of Cooper, Barton and Brodell, "Progress of Farm Mechanization," USDA Misc. Publ. No. 630, Oct. 1947. Also on "Farming's Chemical Age," by E. Hodgins, *Fortune*, Nov. 1953.

4. The USDA determines these prices with the aid of a monthly parity index, which uses the period 1910-1914 as a base, that is, a period during which price parity between industry and agriculture is held to have been 1:1, i.e., optimum. See "Price Programs of the USDA." Agricultural Information Bulletin No. 13, 1953.

5 "Parity Handbook," Senate Document No. 129, 82d Cong., p. 13.

6 Goeffrey S. Shepherd, "Agricultural Prices and Income Policy," Iowa State College Press, 1952.

7 Grove and Koffsky, *Journal of Farm Economics*, Nov. 1949, p. 1105-a6; quoted approvingly by Goeffrey S. Shepherd, *op. cit.*

8 D. Gale Johnson, "Trade and Agriculture; a study of inconsistent policies," Wiley, 1950, demonstrates this contention on the basis of AAA reports on the effects of its activities on prices.

9 For details on the activities of the CCC, see "Price Programs of the USDA." As of March 31 the CCC owned outright over $2,790 million worth of farm products; it had "invested" close to $3,439 million in loans on such products, making a total of close to $6,230 million tied up in price support programs. (N.Y. *Times*, May 7, 1954).

NOTE: The figures, in section II, bearing on distribution of farm income were taken from the N.Y. *Times*, Nov. 15, 1953. Those bearing on concentration in land from "Farm Land Ownership," USDA Misc. Publ. No. 699, Dec. 1949.

THE USE OF THE WORD SOCIALISM

The following brief articles comment upon a letter from M. Rubel which appeared in the first issue of DISSENT. *A distinguished French student of Marxism, M. Rubel, raised the question whether the word "socialism" has become so contaminated and vulgarized in recent years as to preclude its usage by those who desire a socialist transformation of society. He then went on to propose a comparison between "the conceptual content of the word 'socialism,' as it was formed in a number of Western mnids more than a century ago, with the significance that this term has taken on throughout the whole world beginning with the First World War. Such a confrontation might succeed in reaching a dramatic conclusion as to the scope and legitimacy of the use of the world 'socialism.' . . ."*

NORMAN THOMAS

For many years leader of the American Socialist Party

I was, of course, interested in the question raised by M. Rubel. I myself have thought for some years and, indeed, have said both in speech and writing that I wished we could have a new vocabulary which would correctly define various ideologies and movements.

Nevertheless, on reflection, I haven't believed it wise or perhaps possible in the world in which we live for any considerable number of democratic socialists to get together and say: "From henceforth we are using a newer and more precise term to describe ourselves in order to purge ourselves of the taint of the misuse of our old name, not only by communists and national socialists but by various heretics with whom we do not agree."

Let me begin with a practical difficulty. I can imagine a fairly large area of harmony among socialists in repudiating certain interpretations given to socialism by large and important groups. I find it harder to imagine an equal harmony today on the definition of a positive belief which might unite them. How easy would it be to get the editors of DISSENT, the *New Leader, The Socialist Call,* and, let's say, *Partisan Review,* to agree on a positive definition?

In the second place, if we should agree, we should be hounded unmercifully by all those whose stock in trade is denunciation of socialism on the ground that we were trying to hide something, that we had become

crypto-socialists and, hence, more dangerous. It is a matter of record that the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Canada had a better time after it accepted a description of itself as democratic socialist than in its early years when it tried hard to avoid that fate. In some ways, I have myself had an easier time as an avowed democratic socialist than some liberals of my acquaintance who protest that they are not socialist but only liberals. (By the way, who is going to define *that* word? Or capitalist in the theoretical sense?)

MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THAN THESE PRACTICAL considerations, is the historical truth that great movements are never wholly consistent, wholly pure, and that the channels in which they move ideologically and practically have never been marked out precisely by logical definition. Christianity is a case in point. Socialism has claimed for itself so great a history rooted, or partially rooted, so far back in the past that for us to repudiate, or abandon, the name as imprecise would in effect cut ourselves off from our roots and deprive our movement of historical inspiration which it is entitled to claim.

I have been in countries where socialism, vaguely and often erroneously understood, is nevertheless a word which means to the masses a road to plenty, peace and freedom. In life that kind of feeling cannot be utterly rejected for the sake of logical precision without great loss in power, a fact which I deplore but must accept. More than that, there has been in the long socialist tradition, despite our differences, the unifying concept of a possible better world of freedom from poverty and exploitation, a world attainable by the lowly, the toilers, the workers, through common effort and cooperation in opposition to special privilege and private ownership of natural resources and monopolistic industries. This we cherish.

Hence the best that we can do, at least in the present stage of public opinion and practical organization, is to define ourselves as democratic socialists in opposition to totalitarians. In effect, that is what has been fairly well done in many European countries where socialism is strong.

TRAVERS CLEMENT

Former National Secretary, Socialist Party

The proposal to take the content of socialism and give it a new name free from all embarrassing connotations is an old one. In the past it has been advanced primarily with the argument that millions of non-socialists were eager to embrace socialist theory, principles and practice, but, confused and misled by reactionary propaganda, were repelled by the

label. Whenever an experiment was tried along these lines, and there have been many of them, the millions never seemed to show up. The back benches were still empty and the front ones presented the same old faces.

M. Rubel's approach is not as simple as this, but it seems to me almost equally naive. The problems confronting the movement and the confusions within it are much too profound to yield to semantic treatment. A strong authoritarian tradition which has its roots in the very origins of socialist thought has compromised the word, but instead of trying to assume a new identity and go on playing the virgin, it is up to socialists to face the implications of this and deal with the issues and problems it has created. Thus far the task has been left too much in the hands of the guilt-ridden, breast-beating "exes" so steeped in the authoritarian trend in socialist thought that their confessions rarely contain even a hint that any other tradition exists.

Also it does not seem to me that the word "socialism" is as discredited as M. Rubel assumes. The term in the radical vocabulary most compromised by the events of the last several decades is "communist" not "socialist," as an analysis of the propaganda shifts of the various CP splinter groups will bear witness.

M. Rubel points out that the word "socialist" is an extremely flexible one. He assumes this is bad because it is confusing. This is the kind of confusion we can thank our lucky stars for, because it is precisely what enables independent socialists to bring new meaning to the term and inject new vitality into the movement. Development and clarification of political terms, in fact, emerge out of just such a process. And it can be pointed out that even the Stalin and Hitler dictatorships were unable to achieve a "unanimously accepted definition, which allows of no equivocation among those who employ the word." Hence the purges.

Finally, one may ask, if we are to surrender terms to the usurpers, just where do we stop? Shall we also give up "liberty," "equality," "fraternity," "peace," "freedom," and all the rest?

SEBASTIAN FRANK

A Veteran European Socialist

M. Rubel has touched upon a vexing problem. Indeed, the term "socialism" which used to convey ideas about a definite set of values has been sadly abused. However, what seems more important even than the abuse of this word is the general misuse of language to which Rubel also points.

Take the following sentence: "It is generally known that science can neither be developed nor make progress without a struggle of opinions,

without freedom to criticize." Who could disagree? The sentence happens to come, however, from Stalin's article on linguistics! One could fill pages with similar quotations from Stalin and other Russian dignitaries praising freedom and the critical spirit, condemning bureaucracy and its methods. And since Stalin's death, official spokesmen in Russia and the satellite countries have been extremely eloquent about the rule of law. What then could one tell a Russian that he has not already been told by his present masters?

Recently a German social scientist, a socialist refugee from the Eastern zone, published a pamphlet to prove that the philosopher Georg Lukacs, who has been living for decades in Russia and its satellites, retains a flavor of critical spirit in his writings and that the content of these writings is incompatible with the ideology of the Russian regime. That may indeed be true; but similar "critical" ideas have been expressed by the leaders of this regime themselves. How can one know whether Lukacs's words are more "sincere" than theirs? And even if they were, what difference would it make inside Russia? How does the mind of the Russian reader function? I have recently been reading some Russian short stories which seemed to me the most bitter satires on Stalin and his regime, but they were obviously not intended as such at all.

Nor is the abuse of language the only problem. In the East and in the West too we are confronted with a manipulated system of communication which, being wholly a one-way affair, allows no possibility of reply. The barrage of words which pours out of the printing presses, radios, television and movies makes it almost impossible for a critical voice, a voice of dissent, to break through. And this holds true, with obvious differences of kind and degree, for both totalitarian and non-totalitarian regimes. It is the very multiplication of words itself that is so confusing, the sheer torrent of language. The result, as Erich Fromm has put it, is either cynicism with regard to anything written on paper or belief in anything voiced by persons in authority. And often enough, both responses go together.

UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES A MAGAZINE founded to defend socialist values and to criticize a society lacking in values will not only have difficulties in surviving but even in making itself understood. And there is, alas, no recipe for overcoming the depreciation of words. "Democracy" has been misused at least as frequently, and in as many ways, as "socialism." Many may identify socialism with the totalitarian regime of Russia, and the term may, on the other hand, serve to turn away the skeptical. (Certain "true believers" will welcome the continued use of the term but only on condition that it be used in exactly the way that suits the special needs of their belief.)

Yet not only a party or movement, but even a loose community of ideas can hardly exist without a name, and can hardly communicate ideas without symbolizing them. Suitable words are not easily invented, nor can ambiguous ones be rejected at will. Names, words like "socialism," grow out of spontaneous processes and they survive even if they are no longer wanted. It seems, therefore, that a discussion on the use of words will in itself bring little result, language being a sphere in which *decisions* can hardly be decisive. Nor can symbols be defended against misuse. In a world, however, in which all thought and all words have been distorted the writer who wants to reveal rather than conceal social facts must try, at least, to avoid slogans and cliches. Sincere groping thought has to be expressed in sober terms and with sober patience. There is no word today which conveys unambiguous concepts.

May I add one more thought, though it is not directly connected with Rubel's letter? Even if we should assume that the term socialism is understood in its original sense, we may still want to use it with a different emphasis today, if only because the structure of society and the social climate have changed greatly since the days in which the socialist idea was first conceived. The use of "socialism" as a term provokes, at best, an image the origin of which lies in different social conditions from those under which we live; it may therefore act as a barrier against the recognition of the new aspects this idea will have to assume today.

The socialist idea arose when capitalist entrepreneurs crushed the social structure of the *ancien régime* and when egoistic behavior threatened to destroy and did destroy the life of many. It was then necessary to raise the flag of the many against the interest of the few. Today, because of the dissolution of society into atomized individuals, the managerial machinery has become overwhelming, and it therefore becomes important, first of all, to defend the individual. Even those who cling to the original meaning of the term "socialism" are not always aware that the defense of the individual is included in this meaning. Marx once wrote: "One must above all avoid setting up 'the society' as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual *is* the social entity. The expression of his life . . . is therefore an expression and verification of the life of society."

"Rugged individualism" once referred to the drive for private gain. It may today be used as an expression connoting a necessary form of resistance against conformism and the power of the managerial machine. Indeed, the courageous stand taken by individuals—rooted, of course, in a community of values—may be the very way in which the meaning of words can again be established.

BOOKS

Theories of Social Class

CLASS, STATUS AND POWER: A READER IN SOCIAL STRATIFICATION. Edited by Reinhard Bendix and Seymour Lipset. The Free Press. Glencoe, Illinois. 725 pp. $6.

Though designed as a college text, this book is so excellently done that it will interest many people outside the academy. Under three major headings (theories of social stratification; studies of the problem in America; research on the problem in other countries) the editors present selections from about sixty authors, ranging from Aristotle to Lloyd Warner. Since it is neither possible nor desirable to deal with each, or many, of the essays in a review, I want to devote most of my space to an article especially prepared for this volume by Bendix and Lipset. Pointing out that the views of Marx and Engels on social class are nowhere succinctly developed by them, the editors offer their own synthesis in an essay entitled "Karl Marx' Theory of Social Classes." It is a splendid effort, but it does not remove one's wish that those final entries in Volume III of "Capital" had been expanded into a full-scale discussion of class.

In common with most critics of Marx' analysis of class, the authors of this essay have elided the crucial distinction which Marx makes between class *an sich* and class *für sich,* a distinction which Marx clearly drew between the objective class, i.e., the societal group whose situation is automatically defined by its relationship to the instruments of production, and the class so delimited which has become conscious of its identity and its role in the struggle either to preserve the existing social order or to change it. Classes, Marx observed, exist before or in the absence of class consciousness.

The existence of classes as concrete entities is determined by their members' position in the productive scheme of a given society. Class consciousness of the proletariat is a crucial prerequisite to the kind of action which Marx envisaged as necessary to the transformation of most capitalist societies into socialist. But the class *an sich* does not depend for its existence upon the birth of this collective consciousness. It already *is.*

It would have been an outright contradiction of Marx' basic philosophic position to have said, in effect, that it is the consciousness of class which calls it into existence. Nevertheless it is usually made to appear as if this is exactly what he did say or imply. And despite the general lucidity of their presentation and the depth of their understanding, Bendix and Lipset have—because they, too, fail to distinguish clearly between the class in itself and the class for itself—committed the same errors of analysis. Discussing Marx' treatment of the emergence of common beliefs and actions within a class, and how these developments are facilitated by a number of variables arising from the productive process, the authors conclude that: "The organization of production provides the necessary but not a sufficient basis for the existence [sic.] of social classes." And again: "But the existence of common conditions and the realization of common interests are in turn only the necessary, not the sufficient bases for the development of a social class. Only when the members of a 'potential' class enter into an association for the organized pursuit of their common aims, does a class in Marx' sense exist."

IN A LONG QUOTATION from "German Ideology" the authors include Marx' assertion that "the class . . . achieves an in-

dependent existence over and against the individuals, so that the latter find their condition of existence predestined, and hence have their position in life and their personal development *assigned to them by their class, become subsumed under it.*" (my emphasis) From this the authors inexplicably conclude that the "formation of a class . . . is a gradual process, which depends for its success upon the development of 'common conditions' and upon the subsequent realization of common interests." Thus they have confounded the very existence of a class with something vaguely termed its "success" and predicated its ultimate reality on a "realization of common interests."

A revealing quotation from the "Poverty of Philosophy" is next introduced, only to be denied two pages later. From Marx: "Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The domination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. This mass is thus already a class as against capital, *but not yet for itself.* In this struggle . . . this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself." (Emphasis in original.) And Lipset and Bendix: "It will be apparent from the preceding discussion that Marx did not simply identify a social class with the fact that a large group of people occupied the same objective position in the economic structure of a society. . . . Subjective awareness of class interests was in his view an indispensable element in the development of a social class."

If the authors' word "development" be here equated with emergence they are guilty of obvious misinterpretation. But even if they mean by "development," a process of evolving ultimately to a condition where the class assumes its self-conscious role in the struggle for social transformation, they are still guilty of obfuscation. For Marx did clearly "identify a social class with . . . position in the economic structure of a society."

In extenuation of the preceding strictures it should be pointed out that a passage from the "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" does indeed suggest a *change* in the character of classes which follows directly from activity for political ends. This, however, is simply a specific reflection once again of the distinction between class *an sich* and class *für sich.* Speaking of the French peasants of that period, Marx said: "Insofar as millions of [peasant] families live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode of life, their interests and their culture from those of other classes, and put them into hostile contrast to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is a local interconnection among these small peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no unity, no national union and no political organization, they do not form a class.' But to conclude from this, as do the authors, that "the peasants do not form a social class in Marx' sense," is to confuse the reality of the class with its possible role in historical change at some time in the future.

I HAVE DEALT WITH THIS ESSAY at length for two reasons. The first is that for all of his lack of precision in his discussion and delineation of class, Marx' formulation and treatment of the concept have been the essential point of departure—avowed or otherwise—for vast amounts of materials that have dealt with the phenomenon during the past 100 years. The second reason is that the failure to distinguish adequately between the concepts of class *an sich* and class *für sich* which is demonstrated in the Bendix-Lipset essay leads to conceptual and theoretical formulations of a dubious nature. This is not to say that contemporary theories of class must or should be evaluated by the degree to which they accord with or differ from Marx' formulations. Certainly Marx' own prognostications based on his view of class and the nature of class struggle have not proved altogether accurate. His estimates of the growth of self-consciousness, of the psychological and material consequences of advancing industrialization, and of the tendency to sharp polarization of society's producing and owning groups need serious recasting in the

light of trends manifest during the past 60 or 70 years. But that is not the point at issue. It is not Marx' prescience with which we are concerned, nor is it even the correctness of his non-predictive formulations. Rather it is with the accuracy of his interpreters and critics, and the consequences of their interpretations for an understanding of social structure and the possibilities of social action.

Every man is free to define class as he sees it, or even to deny its existence if he chooses. But such definitions or denials are inevitably—though most often implicitly—referred to Marx' basic dictum of the conflict between classes. This conflict comes into existence as the classes themselves come into being. It is independent of self-identification or awareness. It is always socially significant, and an understanding of its consequences is crucial to an understanding of the dynamics of culture in any society. When one has exorcised classes or denied their reality, either by making their existence contingent upon awareness or by stressing obvious facts of social mobility, one has thereby exorcised also the significance of class conflict as a factor in social relations and social change. These, then, are the ultimate effects of the insistence that classes must be "conscious of themselves" before they can even be considered classes.

THE ASSERTION THAT MARX was all wrong because class-consciousness and the consequent social revolution which he predicted appear about as remote as ever, implies that he was wrong also in his views concerning the inevitably conflicting *interests* of the owners and the producers in capitalist society. In this currently popular view, society is seen as a web of interacting and mutually benefiting status groups, each of which is functionally dependent upon the others for the greatest welfare of all. This is why there has recently been a fashionable resurgence of the frontier view that America is essentially a classless society, a jig-saw picture of differently-shaded, perhaps differently-shaped particles, all of which are not only essential to creation of the whole pattern but which also lie flatly and evenly interlocked on the level surface that is American social structure.

In their essay Bendix and Lipset have brought together and succinctly revealed some of the inadequacies of Marx' formulations, particularly on the predictive level. It is unfortunate that they have also, by their attempt to minimize the analytic significance of the distinction between class *an sich* and class *für sich,* paved the way for the continued misunderstanding of the actual role of "unconscious classes" in the march of history. The selection by Charles Page on "Social Class and American Sociology" illustrates this point perhaps more clearly. Page identifies two schools of class theorists: those concerned with class as a socio-economic aggregate, whom he equates with Marxism; and those concerned with socio-psychological phenomena and who see class as coming into existence only with self-consciousness. While recognizing the "great value" of the former "as an instrument in the analysis of historical change and social structure," he feels uncomfortable in the presence of squaring this "fact" of class "with the kind of stratification reflected by social attitudes." One might suggest that Page could regain his composure if he desisted in his "squaring" efforts. That way schizophrenia lies. Attitudes are assailed, molded, coerced and even created by a host of other influences than one's relations to the instruments of production. Only simplistic determinists could assert otherwise. But while one's *attitudes* may be the consequence of multiple determinants, one's *position* in the productive framework *is.*

The study of attitudes is clearly a legitimate area of inquiry. But only confusion can result from an attempt to "square" each individual's attitudes with his objective position in the system of production. If the one followed neatly from the other, class and class-consciousness would indeed be identical and simultaneous in origin. That they are not is significant, of course. But what is even more significant is the fact that an individual's position in the social structure exists in spite of his feelings about it or about anything else. And

this position has certain inevitable correlates. One need not recognize one's position in the structure in order to be involved with these correlates, any more than one need recognize the existence or the role of pneumococcus in order to be carried off by that disease or to be saved by several shots of the correct antibiotic.

Max Weber in his essay, "Class, Status and Party," which the editors have reprinted, points up a distinction between "status groups" and "classes." "Status honor" and a "style of life" derive from the former, while the latter is economically determined. Classes are related to the production and acquisition of goods while status groups are characterized by consumption. Recognizing that there is always an important overlap between the two, Weber does not, however—as do so many others—hold for the identity of the two groupings.

THE SECOND AND THIRD PARTS of the volume, those which concern themselves primarily with empirical materials on class and status phenomena in America and elsewhere, comprise the greatest part of the total. It is obviously impossible to discuss even a few of the essays in any detail in the space available. But some general comments may be relevant.

E. Digby Baltzell's essay achieves an interesting if not unique solution of the problem of distinguishing between class objective and class subjective by stressing its "abstract" features. "It is not a question of whether the objective class concept is more, or less, 'real' than the subjective class concept; rather, both concepts are abstractions from concrete reality, and the failure to treat them as such may lead to reifiction or a sterile circular reasoning." Social scientists are forever fearful of reifying. They often carry the dread so far that all of the concrete phenomena in the cultural universe become, in their eyes, abstractions and are thus removed from the realm of really fruitful objective analysis. There is no reason at all why we should not look upon class phenomena—the subjective as well as the objective kind—as real; and certainly no reason why the treatment of them as such must lead to "sterile circular reasoning." There's good reason, however, why those who resist the implications of the reality view of classes suggest that they are abstractions. It's another way of getting rid of the distasteful *facts* of class.

I have tried to suggest that the existence of classes does not depend upon their recognition either by analysts of American social structure or by the members of a class themselves. I would like to add one thing more; and that is that the huge body of research which has been devoted to analysis of status or prestige—and which is treated in many articles in the Bendix-Lipset collection—is unlikely to yield significant insights into social conflict and change so long as its practitioners continue to stress these stratification features in isolation, or so long as they inaccurately attribute to them profound dynamic concomitants. Thus the many prestige and status ranking studies which divide communities into varying numbers of "classes" merely confound the analytic significance of the term as a clue to understanding certain on-going stresses in contemporary capitalist society. This is not to deny the reality of differences in status and prestige, or the value of examining their effects. It is simply to assert that any such scheme of social strata will have greater value for understanding problems of social change when related—where possible—to the more significant "dynamic class" relationships.

ONE OTHER POINT. It is a point recently made by Melvin Tumin in an excellent critique of a paper on social stratification written by two of American sociology's leading theoreticians, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore ("Some Principles of Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, April, 1945). In this article, Davis and Moore start "from the proposition that no society is 'classless' or unstratified [for there is] . . . a universal necessity which calls forth stratification in any social system." And: "Social inequality is . . . an unconsciously evolved device by which societies insure that the most important positions

are conscientiously filled by the most qualified persons. Hence, every society, no matter how simple or complex, must differentiate persons in terms of both prestige and esteem, and must therefore possess a certain amount of institutionalized inequality."

Apart from the plain fact that "social inequality" may not "insure" anything of the kind, there is a subtler logic to the formulations, a more important lesson to be learned. Having equated "class" with "stratification" and endowed "social inequality" with the twin sanctions of inevitability and ethical goodness, the authors may now expect us to conclude that a classless society is neither possible nor desirable. This is a line of reasoning congenial to many social class theorists who equate prestige and status with class. For who would dare deny that prestige or esteem differences are an inevitable attribute of any social system? And if individuals so differentiated be defined as members of social classes, then these, too, become inevitable, and classless societies thereby impossible. If, on the other hand, status is one thing and class clearly another, then we may still believe that a classless society, i.e., a society in which there can be no individual distinctions in terms of ownership or non-ownership of the socially useful instruments of production, is feasible. Opponents of change will welcome those researches and concepts which identify status and prestige with class. Others, however, might prefer to sharpen the distinction.

If "membership" in a class be seen as deriving primarily—even if not always—from such concrete, objective factors as one's position in the productive system, the twin phantoms of self-identification and social status as the *sine qua non* of class may be exorcised, even while we recognize that identification may be strong, that there may be status-prestige correlates, and that the individuals may in many cases consciously identify their interest with those of a class to which they do not "belong." (Cf. especially in this connection Bendix's fine discussion of the role of the intellectual in a revolutionary situation and the mass support behind the rise of such a totalitarian movement as Nazism.) Class defined in status terms, or class which is recognized *only* "when it recognition finds," is not really class and gives us few insights into the dynamics of social life at this moment of world history.

ROBERT MANNERS

The Customs of the Country

COMPANY MANNERS, by Louis Kronenberger. Bobbs-Merrill Indianapolis and New York, 1954. $3.00.

We are so surfeited nowadays with national self-congratulation that we forget it once had a ring of the sincere and grateful. The colonists, and the early citizens of the United States, often wrote of their devotion to this extraordinary place in ways quite distinct from the national devotional literature of other nations. A new arrival, wrote Crèvecoeur in the 1770's, "is arrived in a new continent; a modern society offers itself to his contemplation, different from what he had hitherto seen. It is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess everything, and of a herd of people who have nothing." But soon the gratitude becomes intemperate; a real appreciation is transformed into an emotional diversion from reality; and a few paragraphs later Crèvecoeur is writing: "We are the most perfect society now existing in the world. Here man is free as he ought to be"; and all at once we are in the familiar and dismaying realm of the self-hypnotized publicist. And the long, unending task of correction takes up with this statement of a contemporary: "Perhaps the picture (Crèvecoeur) gives, though founded on fact, is in some instances embellished with rather too flattering circum-

stances." That from a pen which even twentieth-century professional suspectors of subversion may be expected to credit: George Washington's.

Crèvecoeur himself paid the penalty of his over-estimate. Comes the Revolution, and Crèvecoeur painfully confesses: "No country can exhibit more affecting (instances of great distress) than these afflicted provinces. . . . But why should I wonder at this political phenomenon? Men are the same in all ages and in all countries." The contrast would be a joke if it were not that we face the consequences of that joke every day.

Mr. Kronenberger pitches his tent on just that ground, our need to face reality. "We lack realism drastically, fatally," he says, and for a man whose vocabulary is conservative, that's strong language. His aim in "Company Manners" is to take up that indispensable task of correction, which a good many writers nowadays find too hot a potato. He would like to disentangle the real from our corrupt persuasions concerning it.

"Company Manners" covers: Americans as "not an artistic people"; Broadway's gimmicked theatre; television as a stupefying social phenomenon; the class of "creative" rich; the coarsening of behavior; and so on. Which is to say it covers effects rather than causes; and everyday effects, not large ones, vaguely conceived. It is more concerned with neckties than with psyches; with gags than with gag rules; with Dale Carnegie than with Andrew. It is what crosses your mind when you say hello that strikes Mr. Kronenberger as having an importance as great as divorce statistics. The psychopathology of everyday life, if you will; the usual province of the realistic novelist.

Mr. Kronenberger characterizes our time, borrowing Auden's phrase, as an Age of Anxiety, and also, coining one of his own, as an Age of Publicity. Yet he is able to get through a 200-page description of this anxiety, and only mention the H-bomb once! That is because he thinks in terms of the whole spirit of the age, seeing it as caught in an insatiable will for change and extremity, in place of skepticism and moderation. In this connection he sets up an interesting dichotomy among writers. In one camp are the men who play the roles of prophet, teacher, moralist, martyr, saint, sinner, seer—the Melvilles, Nietzsches, Kierkegaards, the Gides, Dostoyevskys, D. H. Lawernces. About these he inquires, aside from their own personal attributes, to what degree they encourage *in others* the virtues he admires: independence, individualism, skepticism, the relaxed will?

Over against them he places the old humanists: Socrates, Montaigne, Erasmus, Hume, E. M. Forster. And we begin to understand Mr. Kronenberger's frame of reference. From within it he is able to perceive much, startlingly much that has escaped other observers.

He perceives that the enthusiasm some classes show for museums does not reflect an artistic culture, any more than a Society for the Preservation of Folklore reflects a thriving folk tradition. He perceives more subtly than any newspaper critic the corruption of a theatre in which nearly nothing is produced that hasn't been "angled," "slicked," and "gimmicked" to make it a hit. Some of the most satisfying pages in the book are those on Oscar Hammerstein:

> Too often the librettos simply fail to be gay without ever becoming properly serious; they swim in a sea of facile sentiment, glib idealism and humanitarian clichés. The matter is really a simple one: Mr. Hammerstein has raised the libretto a notch or two above its traditionally ghastly level, has brought it to about the level of women's magazine fiction or B movies. Instead of being an insult to the middlebrow intelligence, he has made the libretto a sop to the middlebrow emotions.

What a long time it has taken for someone to say that! In places like this the book's function of focusing on reality is most evident. Read: "For it's not only that the third-rate is so mechanical, meretricious and shallow as to stand self-exposed; it's that the second-rate is gratefully regarded as a *corrective*. And in that sense it impedes progress at least as much as it represents it." It is diffi-

cult to imagine a more thorough destruction of the claims of the mediocre. And it is good to have it remorselessly labeled: mediocre.

When Mr. Kronenberger gets to "the decline of sensibility" he hits where it hurts most. It is not that we sell out, says he, so much as that we convince ourselves we haven't. It's not that, in a democracy, we have lost the restraints a class society imposes on manners — who wants them? It's that contempt for them has bred familiarity. Humor itself, like many of our social gestures, has become a "national front," a public-relations device for disguising our bad behavior, both from ourselves and our victims.

I don't want to digest "Company Manners" here, I want to recommend it; and at the same time I want to suggest that an unqualified rave is, unfortunately, not called for. The genre of cultural criticism is after all not new. Henry Adams did it as pseudo-autobiography with all the aspects of our culture examined for their *use* as education to a man facing the twentieth century. This was not a gimmick; it was literature. That is, Adams, in giving thought to the form of his work, activated the substance. De Tocqueville saw it all as an object lesson in democracy to a world pregnant with democracy. This too was no trick, but it invested every page with excitement and momentousness; for while the events recounted were historical, the book was historic: it aimed to "make" history.

Mr. Kronenberger's failure on this score, though literary, is, in the end, more than literary. For Adams and De Tocqueville, their methods were not merely literary devices. Adams really did feel that his culture had let him down, as compared with the ideal culture he believed he'd found in the Middle Ages. De Tocqueville really was addressing himself to the political situation in Europe, and felt that America had much to say to it, both as example and as warning. These are large themes. With Mr. Kronenberger, on the other hand, a reader frequently has the sense that all "Company Manners" records is an affront to the author's taste. Whatever may be said for taste as a guide to the arts, it is bound to falter as a guide to the spirit of an age.

This fundamentally subjective approach to his theme must get Mr. Kronenberger into all kinds of difficulty. Thus, while nearly every chapter in the second half of the volume opens with a great profession of impartiality and good feeling, this tone always vanishes within two pages. Obviously the author is less interested in presenting "a survey of an age" than in spelling out the terms of his recoil. " . . . What is particularly to our credit," concludes the second page of the last chapter, "we get real pleasure out of making others happy." Next sentence: "The real trouble is — "; but there's no need to complete the sentence. The effect is of autobiography masking as cultural analysis, very nearly the reverse of "The Education."

There could be no complaint about Mr. Kronenberger's substituting a series of sharp impressions for some formulated or implicit historical vision if he could manage it in the way, to take a different sort of example, that D. H. Lawrence does in the "Studies in Classic American Literature," with his dark predictions of psychic and social upheaval. But we know too much about the abysses of spiritual and political existence to accept as adequate the Kronenberger formulation: " . . . The climate I desiderate is no more than a salubrious, breeze-swept temperate zone." Mr. Kronenberger's slight disaffection for the apocalyptic Melvilles, Dostoyevskys, and Lawrences derives precisely from his rational but somewhat anemic conception of the range of human experience. For a cultural critic of our time, Mr. Kronenberger dwells too much in a temperate zone, where life is always a September afternoon, and Arctic winters and tropic Julys never intrude.

Niel Glixon

RECENT BOOKS RECEIVED

INTERRELATIONS OF CULTURES, a volume in the Collection of Intercultural Studies published by the United Nations, UNESCO, 387 pages, $2.00.

UNDER MILK WOOD, by Dylan Thomas. A Play for Voices, published by New Directions, 1954, $3.00.

IN THE MINDS OF MEN, by Gardner Murphy. Basic Books, N. Y., 1953.

Miscellany

"Welcome to Freedom Village"

Helen Mears

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN about the failure of the West to gain the "minds and hearts" of Asia. The major reason for this failure, however, is ignored: the extreme divergence of U. S. practice from U. S. ideology.

Consider the Korean prisoner-of-war episode. For two and a half years of war, negotiations for a truce were delayed ostensibly because the Western powers insisted on the humanitarian principle of "voluntary repatriation" which our press interpreted as meaning that prisoners of war, when released by their captors, should be "free"; that they need not return to "death and slavery"; that they should become civilians with a "free choice" for their future.

Well, the anti-Communist POWs are "free." In the name of the UN, General John E. Hull issued a proclamation to that effect one minute after midnight on January 22, 1954. Praising these now free men for having resisted the Communist blandishments, General Hull said that they are "living symbols providing hope for freedom to millions who still suffer under Communist oppression." James S. Wadsworth, deputy U. S. Representative to the UN, said that "the free world has proved that it will not break faith with those who stand for freedom against slavery," and added that the release of the prisoners was "a beacon of new hope to millions now living under Communist tyranny." In Washington Secretary Dulles declared:

> The prisoners of war in Korea who do not desire to be repatriated are now being released and will revert to civilian status punctually in accordance with the terms of the Armistice Agreement. We can take great satisfaction from that fact. Oftentimes doubt has been expressed as to whether this release would actually happen. Now it has happened, and we can all rejoice that human dignity and the rights of the individual are being respected. A new principle of humanity has been written into the hard rules of war. We have stood fast for the right, and it has prevailed.

It seems not to occur to us to compare the actual fate of these released prisoners with our inspirational description. Has the U. S. actually "written a new principle of humanity?" Has it really provided "new hope to millions now living under Communist tyranny?"

WHAT IS TO BECOME of these newly "free" men, these "living symbols" of Western humanism? An AP dispatch from Seoul provides a clue:

> Only one-third of the anti-Communist Korean prisoners who were turned over to the UN command have expressed a desire to join the ROK army. . . . This small number comes as a surprise to the ROK which estimated as high as 90 per cent would join the Army. A source that can not be identified said the Government was so shocked it was making all the released anti-Communist prisoners subject to draft.

Mr. Dulles, in asserting that "the prisoners of war in Korea . . . will revert to civilian status punctually in accordance with the terms of the Armistice Agreement," seems curiously uninformed.

Similarly, the press reports that the Chinese POWs were pronounced "free civilians" while on the American LST ships that were carrying them to Formosa. In Formosa, however, these "free civilians" were taken to induction centers for "reindoctrination," after which they were to be "permitted" to join Chiang Kai-shek's army. Will those who do not choose to join the army be exempted from the draft?

What would become of these men if they did not join either the ROK or the Chinese Nationalist Army? Most of them have been prisoners for years, and have been in the army for an even longer period. They are given no money. They have no homes; no jobs. As General Van Fleet once told a Congressional Committee, the ROK troops (even those who were "integrated" with our own) were paid the equivalent of ten cents a month, so they obviously have no savings. Under

the conditions which in fact exist in Korea and Formosa, "freedom" for these POWs means to transfer from one army to another, Mr. Dulles' rhetoric notwithstanding.

Thousands of Korean and Chinese soldiers deserted and came over to the American side as the result of propaganda leaflets dropped on their lines by the U. S. Army. Did these leaflets make perfectly clear to these soldiers just what we meant by the freedom we urged them to accept? Or did the men who deserted do so believing that they were to be free to live as civilians, with jobs, homes, and civil liberties? No matter what the leaflets said, "the terms of the Armistice agreement," according to Mr. Dulles, promised them "civilian status."

Americans have tended to accept the idea that these POWs surrendered because they were fanatic anti-Communists. The fact, however, that two-thirds of the released Koreans did not want to join the ROK army clearly cancels the idea that these men consider joining the armies of Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek to be identical with "freedom."

As administered to date, our "new principle" is not likely to be a "beacon of new hope to millions now living under Communist tyranny." On the contrary, the outcome seems perfectly designed to confirm the Communist charge that the U. S. determination not to return the prisoners was due to the U. S. Army's desire to gain these thousands of soldiers to implement the Asian-Fight-Asian policy. This suspicion will be strengthened for anyone who thoughtfully reads our reports of the arrival of the ROKs at their induction center. According to a *New York Times* correspondent (January 22) an "American advisor" of the ROK Army, watching the POW come in "after an 18-hour trip in a tightly packed boxcar" commented that it didn't matter whether they volunteered for the ROK Army or not, since "they'll come back to us in the draft anyway."

The suspicion will be further strengthened by an AP dispatch of February 20, 1954 which reported that the South Korean Major General Choi Duk Shin had arrived in Saigon to try to convince France to accept Seoul's offer of an ROK division for the Indo-China war.

What did actually happen to these thousands of Koreans and Chinese? Until they were "released to freedom" our press and news-weeklies incessantly described their plight. Once they were turned over to Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek, however, they were forgotten. A few brief references, however, suggest the end of the story. On February 16, *The New York Times* reported that 3,700 ex-captives were inducted into the ROK army, leaving 3,900 still in concentration camps. Of these 3,900 some "failed to pass military medical examinations while others are insisting on civilian employment." The difficulty of providing acceptable "civilian employment," however, is suggested by the report that the ROK Army has asked the U. S. Eighth Army to permit the ROK "to forcibly induct" 1,000 of the former prisoners into the Korean Service Corps—the Korean service which supplies laborers for the U. S. Army in Korea. As of February 16 General Maxwell D. Taylor, Eighth Army Commander had refused this request. But what finally happened? The answer remains a mystery. A phone call made on May 19 to the *Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, *Newsweek* and *Time* received the reply that none of these agencies had carried any follow-up story on the released Korean POWs. The fate of the 3,900 remains a mystery. But for the Chinese POWs, the end of the story is explicit. *Newsweek* on May 3 reported that the Chinese National Army on Formosa had inducted 13,000 ex-POWs into its ranks.

American propagandists, who talk incessantly of "Freedom," "human dignity," and "the rights of God and Man," are destroying the meaning of words which have, in the past, expressed genuine values. The Koreans and Chinese who set out for "Freedom Village" and were welcomed into the "Free World," to enjoy "the sunlight of Freedom," only to land in another army against their will, may wonder what the difference is between "Freedom" and "enslavement."

By turning our traditional values into propaganda slogans we are debasing the

words which have expressed these values, and are debasing the values along with the words. The fate of the POWs provides a practical demonstration. By now, in Korea, the word Freedom must be a term of mockery, like the word "Liberated," which even Americans have turned into a wisecrack.

It is not easy to demonstrate humanitarian concern for the individual, or to promote democratic ideas while fighting in an Asian country, and "utilizing" Asiatics as soldiers and drafted low-wage labor. But a Western people who are fighting in Asia, and who justify the war on ideological grounds between democracy and totalitarianism, ought perhaps occasionally to wonder what impression of democracy is given to the Asiatic people by our actual practice toward Asiatics in Asia.

Can a One Party System Be Democratic?

Eric Lee

THE TITLE DOUBTLESS APPEARS to be contradictory: democracy would seem to imply a multi- or at least bi-party system, for how else will the electorate be able to express its preferences? And isn't such expression the very essence of civil liberties and, therewith, democracy?

Unfortuntately, this is *a priori* reasoning. There is a fact which invalidates the theory. That fact is Mexico.

Since 1920, the Republic has been ruled by one party, the Party of the Mexican Revolution (lately, the official name has been changed to the Party of the Institutional Revolution). There are other parties, to be sure, but they are without influence. Not one province is governed by a National Action officer, no one belonging to the Federation of People's Parties was even suggested for the present cabinet without first having renounced membership in the FPP. Yet it is my contention that the only safeguard for democracy in Mexico is, in spite of its corruption, the continued power of the PRI.

The difficulty is that groups opposing one party rule in Mexico are, to varying degrees, anti-libertarian, while the PRI—rigging elections, backing the Army, dominating the rubber-stamp Senate and Chamber of Deputies—is basically democratic. Democracy is, in effect, something the PRI imposes on those whose preferences are specifically *un*democratic. After all, what may be "democratic" in one country sponsors authoritarianism in another, e.g., feminine suffrage. The PRI long opposed it, finally gave in, watched the women vote for the Catholic Right (PAN). There was nothing to do but stuff the ballot boxes, install PRI deputies and senators where PAN candidates had clearly won.

It is the PRI which calls out troops to protect the right of the opposition to free assembly—so long as it stays just that: talk.* The PRI permits daily attacks by the leading newspapers of the Republic—so long as it doesn't go beyond that: journalism. Every citizen votes as he pleases, although since the PRI counts the ballots, the result is obvious. (If the elections were honest, any coalition of anti-PRI parties would win; and democracy would lose.)

IS IT COMPATIBLE WITH CIVIL LIBERTIES to tolerate groups whose programs expressly disagree with the fundamental suppositions of a democracy? *Per contra,* what kind of a democracy is it that allows only those parties which do agree on suppositions? Does democracy mean the right to all but basic—even undemocratic—changes, i.e., the ones that really matter?

The PRI answer is, roughly, that democracy is not an unmitigated Good. If the people have their way, it may well be that they will "democratically"

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* When, a few months ago, the FPP did refuse to confine itself to talk, when it staged riots in downtown Mexico City, the PRI reacted with characteristic "democracy": the FPP was banned. Yet not a week later, the PRI declared that the recently formed Authentic Party of the Revolution (anti-PRI) would enjoy the full protection of the law (= the PRI).

vote for authoritarian parties. Theoretically, this is impossible: if the people vote, say, for segregation, dictatorship or war, then segregation, dictatorship or war *is* democratic. This is word-play, and it is too much of a luxury when one remembers, for example, the embarrassing percentage of votes cast for Hitler in 1933. The PRI siphons off resentment by permitting everyone to storm and bluster. The PAN headquarters are as large as the PRI Executive Committee's building; they print as many pamphlets; their speakers command large audiences. All this the PRI permits them. What the PRI will *not* permit is the one thing of importance: power.

Similarly, while the People's Party (a CP front) and the CP itself are hopelessly discredited, the PRI continues to play them off against the Right. Whenever the Stalinists get too noisy, the PRI lets the PAN thunder "Mexico is a Catholic country!"; when the Church threatens to get out of hand, the PP is always around to restate Mexico's devotion to "Socialist" principles.

Convinced of the necessity of "democratic repression," the PRI is still able to distinguish between the authoritarian sympathizer who is only a nuisance and the authoritarian conspirator who is indeed a menace. Which is why it is quite all right for Siqueiros to paint several murals in University City but not all right for Lombardo Toledano to dominate Mexican labor unions. To paraphrase Jimmy Walker's statement that no girl was ever ruined by a book, has anyone ever turned Soviet agent after having looked at a painting? But Stalinist domination of labor unions is something else again. That *would* have disastrous consequences.

Perhaps this policy is short-sighted; I don't think so. If you can undercut Communism by letting Communists decorate public buildings, you're doing good. And if the Communist becomes too objectionable, "democratic repression" is always available. (As in the case of General Jara. The PRI said nothing when he signed his umpteenth peace pledge, but when he accepted the Stalin Medal, that was too much. Amid speeches praising his devotion to the Homeland, he was retired from military command. On a handsome pension, of course.)

So it is, with all the twists and turns characteristic of more than thirty years in office—from the anti-clericalism following Obregón's murder by the *cristero* de León Toral to Cárdenas' agrarian reform, from Alemán's industrialization program to Ruiz Cortines' much touted clean-up campaign—the PRI follows a familiar course, slapping down the Right (but not too hard) and coddling the "Left" (but not too much). If there is any middle way in Latin American politics, the PRI is it. The party expropriated U.S. holdings in 1938 (e.g., Standard Oil), but did it without the violence which accompanied Perón's taking over the British-owned transportation system (in 1945). It winks at Paz Estenssoro in Bolivia, deplores Arbenz' indecision in Guatemala; and it also refuses to sign the American-proposed joint defense pact. The PRI does not recognize Franco, offers refuge to anti-Franquist exiles—and many *are* Communists, why kid ourselves?—but nevertheless refuses extradition of General Maw (the Chinese Nationalist imprisoned for fraud, and wouldn't Peking love to get *him* back!)

The PRI deserves its name. The Revolution, after forty years, *is* an institution.

The intricacies, not to say the mysteries, of Mexican politics obviously do not lend themselves to easy comprehension. What Mr. Lee says in his amusing little article about the one party system in Mexico puzzles us; though, as with everything else printed in this magazine, he speaks for himself. Burdened as we are with chores, polemics, problems and bills, we refuse to be drawn into a quarrel. But if any of our readers. . . .

If You Were Eisenhower . . .

Sebastian Franck

I. A SOMEWHAT UNFRIENDLY REVIEWER has denounced DISSENT'S radical politics as "irresponsible." He records having once asked a DISSENT editor: "Suppose you were running the government, what would you have done?" Our editor replied that he could not be responsible for proposing governmental policy today. This answer might well have been more explicit, but it is nonetheless clear that the reviewer failed to understand it.

C. Wright Mills, in his recent DISSENT article, "The Conservative Mood," pointed out that the popular image of government in America today is that of an automatic machine. With this image in mind, the question, "What would you do if you ran the government?" seems wholly justified. Responsible opponents of government policy are expected to offer alternative ways of running the machine. The radical, however, knows that government is a complex function resulting from the interplay of social forces, and that it is very largely determined by those powerful forces which occupy key positions in society. If the radical is at odds with these forces and with their characteristic mode of thought, how is he to propose policy for them?

The radical aims at the creation of true democracy. He cannot impose his ideas of government before they are held by the people at large. His major concern is with the basic framework of government rather than with specific features of government policy. He can only imagine running a government in a domestic environment which has in some fundamental way been transformed. Under prevailing conditions it is illusory to imagine that any government will initiate a bold new course. Where certain interests and attitudes remain sacrosanct, choice of action is inevitably limited.

The radical does not preach political abstention. He may, as Irving Howe suggested in the first issue of DISSENT, be willing to vote for Mr. Stevenson. The latter would be held a little better than Mr. Eisenhower, who, in turn—despite the fears of many liberals—would be judged a little worse than Mr. Truman. The radical may oppose some government policies more than others and may even hope to arouse the public sufficiently to obtain the lesser evil. He may lend active support to certain government policies, but at no time does he expect *basic* improvement without a change in social power and political atmosphere. The question, "What would you do if you were President?", carrying with it its own terms and the context of the status quo, is not politically meaningful to the radical. He cannot imagine himself in a position which he opposes. Were an American "Labor Party" to come to power, the question would assume a different character. Under such circumstances, however, world affairs would appear in a new light.

II. THE BURNING PROBLEMS OF the world today appear as dilemmas offering no solutions. The radical seeks a way out but cannot find it in the present situation. Let us take the war in Indochina as an example. Whereas a British Labor government set India free, the French government has never intended to give up Indochina. Groups with financial interests in Indochina have retained their influence in French government circles. The Indochinese nationalist movement was pushed into the Communist camp. The war in Indochina has weakened France and strengthened Russian imperialism in Western Europe and its Communist allies in France. Giving up the fight, however, would not only bring the horror of a totalitarian regime to Indochina but would throw the entire region open to the Russian-Chinese power drive. On the other hand, continuation of the war promises no better results. French concessions to Indochina have been too little and too late. America, with no financial interests at stake, has insisted on providing the native army with arms only to see these arms fall into the hands of the Communists. America, although it can afford a more generous attitude toward national aspirations in Asia than, say, the French, is yet unable to ally itself

with the forces representing these aspirations. America remains powerless to aid Asian national movements in withstanding Russian-influenced totalitarianism.

For some time now the United States has attempted to give the world a picture of the good society by playing up its wealth. Needless to say, the result has been damaging to American prestige. The Voice of America has proved no substitute for American policy. This policy, as the British writer, G. L. Arnold, asserted in a recent article in *Commentary*, attracts "conservative generals, Peronist demagogues, and elderly bed-ridden intriguers in the distinguished succession of Doctors Mossadegh and Syngman Rhee," while permitting the Communists to spearhead national revolutionary movements.

How different the situation would be if there were an American radical movement able to support and give guidance to such movements. How different the outlook would be if the United States government were known as the friend of India, Burma and Indonesia rather than as the protector of Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee. Yet, if you were Eisenhower, you could not change this aspect of American policy.

American policy is caught in a vicious circle in its quest for security. The primacy of purely military considerations often plays into the hands of political forces allied with Russian imperialism. The stronger these forces, the more American policy is determined by military considerations alone.

Radical thought must develop true alternatives to meet this dilemma. The American radical looks towards the creation of an American society capable of dissolving the Communist myth as exploited by Russian imperialism. Insight into the nature of government prevents radicals from succumbing to the illusion that policy proposals to Washington, as presently constituted, could lead to any significant change. With no far-reaching change in sight, the radical cannot share the optimism his liberal critics so often display. Nor can he believe that our military security system is an ultimate safeguard.

These remarks may help to explain why it is impossible for a radical to give a simple answer to a question whose very assumptions he is forced to reject.

CORRESPONDENCE

In Re: Sidney Hook

Editors:

Poor Sidney Hook! Another issue of DISSENT, and Hook again seems to be butt of inexplicable sideswipes, subtle inferences, and essentially meaningless innuendoes. But you are not alone! W. H. Chamberlin in the April 21, 1954 *Wall Street Journal* also takes up the cudgels against Hook's "complacent attitude," but for different reasons than yours, of course. I won't even mention the Stalinists because any analogy would be almost as unfair as those you make between Hook and other favorite scapegoats.

His only "crime," as far as this misguided observer can see it, has been to formulate a broad program for preventing Communists and McCarthyites from assuming prerogatives no responsible and realistic democracy can allow. True there are varying particulars one may take issue with, as I do also, but not in the form of unpleasant and underhanded comparisons.

On the other side of the coin, however, is Hook's almost lone philosophical defense of democratic socialist and humanist values; his ability, contrary to the organizational anarchy which now pleases many DISSENT writers, to work within such groups as the Union for Democratic Socialism and the L.I.D. to actively further and propagate socialist values; and, finally, his recent explicit statement, which reflects the core of much of his life work, that ". . . if democratic traditions and institutions are preserved in the current world-wide totalitarian crusade against them, they will acquire a more socialist content."

I suggest that unless DISSENT wishes to follow in the sour, unpleasant path of sectarianism, it had better draw up bills of particulars against the straw dummies it evidently enjoys kicking around, or else spend its time in more fruitful and constructive inquiry. After all, you might as well realize that DISSENT really has no monopoly on virtue.

GABY KOLKO

[*The references to Sidney Hook which have disturbed Mr. Kolko appeared in several articles, and the authors of these have been asked to write brief replies.—Ed.*]

Mr. Hook, no matter what his early reputation, has distinguished himself in the last few years by leading the ideological reaction in liberal thought, and among such achievements has been his equivocal relation to civil liberties on matters like rooting the Communists out of the universities—as though America's security (if one is to take such phrases seriously) were threatened by an occasional fellow-traveler or party member in various scattered universities. What I find most depressing and irritating in Mr. Kolko's letter, is that from the considerable number of provocative articles in the first two issues of DISSENT, he chooses to be most provoked by two references to Hook, one merely factual by Paul Mattick, one facetious by myself. Hook has never been particularly distinguished by Christian kindness in his references to opponents, and if I have been guilty of questionable taste in attacking him gratuitously, which is probably true, and which I can regret as a stylistic flaw, I still cannot believe that either Hook's morale, his reputation, or his self-esteem will suffer unduly from my 'slander.' Hook will continue to lead the fight against McCarthyism with the crusading spirit and trenchant radicalism of an editor of *The New York Times*, and the fight against Communism with the authoritarian venom of a Hearst executive. If this makes Hook an almost lone philosophical defender of democratic socialist and humanist values, it makes me Leo Tolstoy.

NORMAN MAILER

My references to Sidney Hook in DISSENT No. 1 were based on such familiar facts as his recent statement doubting the wisdom of the repeal of the notorious Smith Act, though he adds that it should be amended. This hardly seems to me an adequate position on civil liberties for a liberal, let alone a socialist. I further refer Mr. Kolko to Hook's articles in the *New York Times Magazine*

on the Fifth Amendment, in which he took a position that strikes me as poorly calculated to stem the growing threat to civil liberties. As for Hook's activities in recent years as one of those intellectuals who has increasingly made a rapprochement with American capitalist society, I refer Mr. Kolko to my article in the *Partisan Review*, January-February 1954, called "This Age of Conformity." There remains Sidney Hook's declaration in favor of socialism, quoted by Mr. Kolko. No doubt. At the moment, however, the actual attitude one has to American society, the degree and vigor of one's criticism, is far more important than the abstract declaration of being, or not being, a socialist. Such declarations are made, so to speak, on Sundays; what interests me rather more is Mr. Hook's activities during the week.

IRVING HOWE

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We have received a great many letters from all over the country since publication of the first issue of DISSENT. *As many as possible have been answered, but we regret that we could not possibly answer all. A cross-section from these many letters is published below.*

Better Than the First

Editors:

I believe that the Editorial Board, in the preparation of the second issue of DISSENT, accomplished the impossible: viz., they succeeded in issuing a number even more valuable than the first issue!

The first three articles are all of general validity. The three dealing with European-American relations are, perhaps, more topical, and, certainly, more controversial. (I am using that word in its correct sense, not in its mid-century American sense, which is merely that of a smear word, almost equivalent to "subversive"). I consider the trio to be the most interesting and worthwhile contributions to the subject in an American periodical since the brilliant article *The Atlantic Curtain* in the Summer 1953 issue of *The American Scholar*. In view of the present intellectual climate in this country, especially among the self-denominated "anti-totalitarian liberals" of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom type, I consider your action in printing this series an act of intellectual courage which deserves the utmost commendation.

In conclusion, may I express my warmest best wishes for success in your valuable efforts towards intellectual clarity and genuine freedom of opinion.

J. L. L.

We Need Such a Magazine

Editors:

I have subscribed for DISSENT and later will donate a little to keep it going. I realize how much we need such a magazine and wish you luck in the undertaking.

S. F.

Tone Too Shrill

Editors:

I liked the first issue of DISSENT very much—the need for your magazine at this time can not be exaggerated—and I would like you to enter my subscription for it.

I would like to add one suggestion. . . . I think that its tone was unfortunately shrill and exhortatory. It would be much more effective to put forward your viewpoint calmly and intelligently. And I hope that future issues will achieve this: a larger measure of assurance, calm appraisal, and objective statement of truth.

International Issues

Editors:

Best wishes for the future! From the first issue it looks as though DISSENT may come closer to the truth about many things in today's world than any other publication I know.

I would like to suggest that you continue to give as much space to a discussion of international issues (European, Asian, Latin American and African) as you do national for, after all, the two are so often inter-related.

R. G. M.

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